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The Story of a Hunt for an Ancestor



Thomas Solley
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This Story

of a British soldier lad
who became the ances-
tor of our branch of the
SOLLEY FAMILY in
America is presented to

by the Writer and the
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George W. Solley
Edward Morgan



GEORGE WILLIS SOLLEY.

THOMAS SOLLEY AND HIS DESCENDANTS

THE STORY OF A HUNT FOR
AN ANCESTOR

By

GEORGE WILLIS SOLLEY

(I)

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WILLIS
SOLLEY
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PUBLISHED BY

EDWARD JUCKET MORGAN

1911

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TO HIM WHO CAME OF A LONG LINE OF PURITANS, PATRIOTS,
MINISTERS AND GODLY FOLK IN OLD ENGLAND AND
THE NEW, INHERITING ONLY THEIR
GOOD CHARACTERISTICS,

MY SON
DAVID TREAT SOLLEY
1894 — 1901.

OF WHOM IN PASSING IT WAS SAID,
"They saw his face as it had been the face of an angel,"

AND TO HER WHO BORE HIM
MY WIFE
SARAH J. E. DICKSON SOLLEY

THIS BOOK IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED.
MCMXI

He fell asleep,
My deep-eyed, wondering child, my flower of spring;
Eager, with sight of Heaven, I could not keep
His feet from its fair hills, his soul from wing,
And so, at brink of morn, he fell asleep.

Into the sweep
Of Earth's divinest sunshine he was born,
Into its very heart he nestled deep;
He was a sun-crowned vision of the morn,
And so, at brink of morn, he fell asleep.

He fell asleep,
My deep-eyed, wondering child that could not stay;
Across the hills he went to scan the sweep
Of that vast country, luminous with day;
And so, at brink of morn, he fell asleep.

Mrs. J. Whiton-Stone.

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PREFACE

THIS book has been written, not because there is anything especially remarkable in the Solley family, but because of my intense interest in Thomas and Eunice Solley. They are the first ancestors of our line of Solley family in America.

The strange story of this British lad, forced from home, and the pathos of his after life, has held a peculiar fascination for me. A more pathetic story can hardly be found in literature.

There is even now only a little group of us, descendants of Thomas and Eunice Solley in America, since the soldier lad was married to his child wife. But wherever you find a Solley, you are sure to see an individualist, with striking characteristics.

The writing of the story has been second in enjoyment only to the discovery of the facts themselves. Libraries at Bridgeport, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, Fitchburg, Leominster, Worcester, Boston, Massachusetts, and Providence, Rhode Island, have been searched for information concerning the Solley family. The clerical work has been done largely by two of "my boys," George N. DesCoteaux and Greydon Elliott, whose interest in its details and whose devotion to me personally, has been a constant inspiration. We are indebted to Dr. John B. Solley, Jr., for data and photographs; and to Miss Abby P. Churchill, nature teacher at the State Normal School at Fitchburg, Massachusetts, for generous help and criticism.

Too much credit cannot be given to Edward J. Morgan, the warmth of whose appreciation has fathered this work, whose ability has secured many of its facts, and who has made the printing of this book possible.

June 1, 1911.

G. W. S.

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THOMAS SOLLEY
AND HIS DESCENDANTS

THOMAS SOLLEY AND HIS DESCENDANTS.

CHAPTER I.

MY FIRST SUCCESS; FINDING THE RECORD.

THE Puritan side of our descent is well known. The roots of the Treat and Wood families, belonging to the maternal side of our house, reach back through Colonial times deep into English history. I am related to the Treat family through both my father's maternal side and my mother's, yet I have always wanted to know the Solley side of our house. Even as a child I built all manner of pictures about it out of my fancies.

My grandfather, Thomas Solley, a most striking character, full of originality and wit, was always very reticent about his family history. He rarely even alluded to it, and it irritated him to be questioned. Some great mystery seemed to hand over his people.

Although I was born and brought up in my grandfather's house, the only things I ever learned from him about his people were the following meagre statements.

Thomas Solley first, my great-grandfather, lived in England. When but a lad he was pressed into military service and sent over to this country with the British soldiers to fight the Continentals in the Revolutionary War.

Young Thomas, together with other lads, was playing games when the British soldiers, called the "press gang," came upon them suddenly, according to the custom of those times, and captured them. And Thomas never again saw his home nor family friends.

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The lad was so indignant at the way he had been treated, that he left the British army when he arrived here, and joined the Continentals to serve the cause of the patriots. Nothing was ever said of him after that, except that he married and settled at Easton, Connecticut, which was formerly a part of the old town of Fairfield. It was known that he had an honorable discharge from Washington's army, and that he enjoyed a pension for his services as long as he lived. But, alas for us, the papers of that discharge were destroyed by my Grandmother Solley in one of those ancient and honorable scourges of New England, known as the "annual house-cleaning."

Like the typical veteran of any war, the first Thomas Solley seems to have been incapacitated for work, and he was always poor. He had a large family of children, several of whom died in childhood. The family never migrated, like many others, and most of their descendants live today in, or near the state of Connecticut, where Thomas Solley first settled.

This was the extent of my youthful knowledge, except that shortly before my grandfather, Thomas Solley second, died at Bethel, Connecticut, he said that he wished very much to go to the old burying-ground at George's Hill, Connecticut, near where he lived when first married, and where his first wife was buried. Some indefinite rumor had reached him that the gravestone of his first wife had been broken and lay on the ground, and he desired very much to set this right before he died.

Why had the first Thomas Solley never retained any connection with his family in old England? Why the mystery and reticence concerning his early life, and also his after life? Whom had he married, and to what family did his wife belong? Only a green scalloped-edged meat platter of Davenport china, and a very old Dutch kitchen table, now in my possession, remained to tell the story of the family life of that first Solley ancestor. Was this detachment of himself from



SOLLEY RELICS.

HIS DESCENDANTS

his family and early associations a family trait? It would seem so, for none of the first Thomas Solley's children had kept together, nor even kept up communication with one another. Neither could any of his descendants in my day even tell how many children he had, whom they married, nor where their descendants now live.

My father, David Treat Solley, relates a vague story of one Henry Solley, son of the first Thomas Solley, who went to sea, and being shipwrecked on the coast of South America, married a Spanish woman, or a native, and settled down there, preferring to remain there always—thus repeating the family story of the first Thomas Solley. Years after this, a son of Henry Solley by this union, grown to manhood, made his way back to the States and visited his uncle, Thomas Solley, my grandfather, at Bethel, Connecticut. My grandfather seemed little affected by his story, and cared nothing about him. After receiving this "cold shoulder," the young man took himself off, and was never again seen or heard from by any of us. With these few clews and this small extent of knowledge, I set out to find my Solley Ancestry.

While at school, and afterwards while teaching at Springfield, Massachusetts, from 1886 to 1893, I once saw the name Solly attached to an article in *Vick's Floral Magazine*, written by a florist and gardener of that name at Springfield, Massachusetts. Calling upon him I found him also to be an Englishman, but of recent immigration, whose ancestors came from the County of Kent, England. He seemed to have had no family connections in this country, and knew little about his own family history. My wife, Sarah J. E. Solley, who lived at one time in England, had seen Yorkshire families of very good standing, of our name. Once, on Leadenhall Street in London, I saw the name on the sign of a business house. Since becoming a Unitarian minister, I find that there are two Unitarian ministers of that name in England, one of them, the Rev. Henry Solly, being a Biblical commentator of standing, and known on both sides of the Atlantic. I had frequently

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

met people who knew the celebrated Doctor Solly, of Colorado Springs, who is an Englishman and a late comer to this country. But none of these faint clues to this family name seemed to be connected. Only one thing was certain. The name and family was entirely of English origin, and until the Revolutionary War, I had not found it then in this country. My great-grandfather, Thomas Solley, who settled at Weston, Connecticut, was probably the first immigrant of that name; and my grandfather, Thomas Solley second, and other members of the family were decidedly English, both in appearance and characteristics.

With my wife and little son I spent the month of October, 1897, at my old home in Bethel, Connecticut. One beautiful autumnal day, with an early start and a lunch basket, my wife and I set out to find the old town of Easton. No drive could be more beautiful. Along the circuitous route we drove, climbing over the foothills of Redding Ridge, over the identical road down which the British passed in the Revolutionary War as they marched to capture Danbury, Connecticut, which they then burned; through the magnificent farming regions of Redding Ridge with Long Island Sound in the far distance glistening in the sun; past the ancient church established long ago by the British Society "For the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," arriving at Easton Common about noon. Here we found the typical New England village with its old mansions and its vanished glory. Here on the Common stood the old meeting house as of yore, and beside it "The Manse," now as always the finest house in the village. Near by was the ancient town academy, a relic of the inspirations of the town fathers, which seemed to have renewed its youth, and had a row of bicycles along its clapboarded side. We knocked at the door of "The Manse," but received no response. Then we went to a shady nook of the Common and ate our lunch. After this we crossed to the village store and inquired of the row of "hangers on" if there was anyone in the town interested in historic antiquities. A stare greeted us, the wags looked at

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one another, and one of them spat, but none replied. I had spoken in a foreign tongue to them. Finally after many explanations they told me that down the road about half a mile from the Common lived a man over ninety years of age, who knew everything that was known about old times. I scented material and hastily drove to the place. I soon found the house and was admitted into the presence of a gentleman of the old school, whose low voice and courtly manners bespoke for him his generation. Alas for me, however, I was too late. The lamp of memory was burning low and was soon to go out. All he could tell me was that he remembered one Eunice Solley, a very old woman even in his youth, who then lived at Redding Ridge, but whether she was married or single he could not recollect. Of no other person of the name of Solley could he tell me. He related some instances of his own life, having been a very zealous churchman who "never missed a Sunday" in the little Episcopal church built in the town of Easton by the same British S. P. G. I had not received much information, but here was another clew. Who was Eunice Solley? Was she a daughter of the first Thomas Solley, or was she his wife? I must find out!

Next we started to find the clerk of the old parish church, who we were told lived near the village. There we found a fearful contrast to the fine old gentleman just visited. The whole atmosphere of the parish clerk's place was that of the "poor white." Around the house disorder seemed to be Nature's law. Even the door-knob to the front door hung loosely in its hole and I had to pound on the panel to announce my presence. A slatternly woman admitted me to an even more slatternly house, full of disorder and odors of long standing. But willingly enough she handed me the records of the old First Parish, which we found to be complete and bound in strong calf. I dived into them with devouring eagerness. I looked over baptismal records, marriages and deaths; ecclesiastical trials, and lists of deacons, but no sign of the name Solley could I find. Having had considerable to do with old church

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records and knowing the value of this especial one to the parish, I handed the book back to the woman who gave it to me, saying, "Do you know what this book is worth?" "No," she replied. "It is worth more than its weight in gold to your parish. Take good care of it," I added. "Your church is rich in such a possession."

From this place we went to the ancient cemetery and hunted long among moss-covered stones of the ancient order, but we found no trace of the name Solley. However, we were still undaunted. Success is always in the unknown quantity. There was still the town clerk to be seen. Passing a sawmill we inquired for this official, and after a long drive we found a neat looking house with a new sign in front of it marked "Town Clerk." Going to the door we fortunately found this official at home. Upon inquiring he told us that he possessed the original records of the town of Weston, and from his big iron safe he brought out to us then and there the precious volume. I felt I was on the track, when lo and behold, I found this record written in the first part of the book:

Thomas Solley, born August 14, 1759.
Eunice Duffee, born December 25, 1767.
They were married December 13, 1782.

CHILDREN:

John Solley, born April 26, 1788.
Elizabeth Solley, born June 21, 1794.
Polly Solley, born August 15, 1797.

Underneath this record was written this simple statement: "Recorded March 29, 1797." There were in the book the same simple records of other families, placed one after the other without note or comment as to what they stood for. This aroused my curiosity. Since then I have asked several antiquarians what these family names meant at the beginning of the town records, and have received only this reply: "They are probably the record of the first families who formed the town." And as we know that both Easton and Weston were

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struck off from the large and ancient town of Fairfield, it is very reasonable to suppose that the first Thomas Solley, having taken to himself a wife and seeking for a foothold in the country of his adoption, had migrated thither to the little company who with him formed the new township.

My first hunt for an ancestor had been successful. I had now found a trace of the first Thomas Solley, his birth and his marriage to Eunice Duffee, and the record of their first three children. I had also found that the Solley family first established in America was one of the original founders of the town of Weston, Connecticut. The day was well nigh spent, and we were far from home, but I had become possessed of more clues. Our journey back to Bethel through "The Glen" and old Redding was to us of the nature of a triumphal march.

CHAPTER II.

THE FINDING OF THOMAS SOLLEY.

IT HAD been my wish for several years since I had gone far enough along in life to look backward, and to realize that I had "years of my own" to count, to visit again the places in the Housatonic valley in the towns of Southbury and Oxford, Connecticut, where I had been as a child. In the uplands of this wild but picturesque region I knew that somewhere among the hills lay the George's Hill settlement, with its ancient graveyard, which contained the grave of my Grandfather Solley's first wife, Melinda Solley. I knew also that near this region was the settlement called by the natives Kettletown, which tradition says was purchased from the Indians for an ancient brass kettle. There my Grandfather Solley, in the days of primitive hand industries of New England, once had a shop for the making of old-fashioned, napped stove-pipe hats. When I used to go on my annual visit as a child to my Grandfather Wood's, who lived just beyond Kettletown at Hull's Hill, I remembered seeing as a child the remains of this old hat shop, which was then standing. I had known some of the virile old stock who lived and thrived in this region, men who had known my Grandfather Solley, but year after year death had taken them, until now I learned that only one remained. I resolved to see him before he died.

While spending the month of August, 1903, at my old home in Bethel, Connecticut, I determined to fulfil my long deferred wish of taking a carriage and driving through this region. The broken tombstone at George's Hill, and my grandfather's wish, drew me to the spot. With a strong horse and buggy



THOMAS SOLLEY'S HOUSE AT KETTLETOWN DISTRICT,
SOUTHBURY.

THOMAS SOLLEY

and John Todd Andrews, son of my old friend Edgar T. Andrews of Bethel, for my driver, I started on my tour through the Housatonic valley. After crossing Bennett's bridge, we drove along the Housatonic River for three miles to the Kettletown road, which is now in a deserted region. Here and there, it is true, stately old mansions are still standing, but with little or no signs of life around them. The farm-lands looked desolate or deserted, and Nature herself, running rampant, was growing a thick bank of gorgeous wild flowers beside the ancient road. As we turned towards Kettletown not a man was seen, and on reaching the old house which stands at the junction of the Kettletown and George's Hill roads, we found it also deserted. It was to this house my grandfather, Thomas Solley, brought the bride of his youth, and to this house, after the death of Melinda Landers, he brought his second wife, Martha Treat Bradley, a young widow with one child named Elizabeth Bradley.

Tradition has it that Thomas Solley married Martha Treat Bradley thirty days after the death of his first wife, that he went to the Methodist preacher, probably Mr. Tuttle, and said, "Brother, my wife is dead, and I want you to get me another companion!" The preacher said, "Why don't you go and see the young widow Bradley of Middlebury? Perhaps you can get her for a wife." He went, and Martha Bradley listened to his story. I heard some of this from Mr. Frederick Gray of George's Hill, and also from others, but never from my grandmother, Martha Solley. However, I have heard her say that "When Thomas made up his mind to do a thing, he did it right off."

The house is now owned by the Roswell family and evidently either sickness or death had taken the elder Roswell, the last surviving link with my people in this region. After looking over the place and knowing that John Roswell had a daughter who lived at Hull's Hill, we drove on to her house. On the Kettletown road we passed the place where my Grandfather Solley's hat shop had stood. That day the only trace

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we found of it was a shallow cellar hole that Nature had now filled with grapevines and wild flowers. I stood upon the stone wall in front of it and took a snap-shot of it with my kodak. Arriving at Mrs. Mary Roswell Mallory's at Hull's Hill, we found her father, John Roswell, the owner of the now deserted farm once owned by my Grandfather Solley. He was an infirm old man of eighty years of age. From Mr. Roswell I could obtain only scraps of knowledge, either about my Grandfather Solley, or the life of the century which they had both nearly spanned. He was too infirm for clear or definite recollections. After plying him with many questions I got the following information: Mr. Roswell had not bought the farm with its hat-shop attachment directly of my Grandfather Solley. He thought several others had lived there before he took it. He remembered my Grandfather Solley well, as he said most of the elder inhabitants did. He could not remember hats being made in that old shop, but said his mother, who evidently lived with him, used it for weaving carpets. The walls of the shop, he said, had been painted with curious life-size pictures of wild scenes, which must have been put there by hilarious hatters. "These scenes," said Mr. Roswell, "were done in colors, of men with daggers run through them and the blood streaming, and all sorts of wild things. It was enough," said he, "to scare anyone. It used to make my hair stand up. When mother got to weaving carpets there, she grew sick of these pictures, and one day she took down a kettle of whitewash and washed them over. I didn't like it very much because she did it."

When I asked him about the church at George's Hill, he said, "George's Hill was just as thickly populated in those days as any other part of this region. There was only a house here and there anyway. We were all new settlers in this region about the Housatonic River. The Methodists built a church on top of George's Hill. They built the church there because there were just as many people there as anywhere else, and they hoped it would become a village

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center. I remember two preachers of that church, in my early days. One of them was called Uncle Joel Pierce, and the other was Joseph Pierce. They both were laymen and loved hunting and fishing. Both hunted foxes. One Sunday one would preach and the other would go hunting; the next Sunday the other would preach, and the first would go hunting. One Sunday when Uncle Joel was to preach he heard the foxes barking and it gave him such a tingling that he said to Joseph, 'Here, Joe, you do the preaching, I'm going to do the hunting today.' People went to church in those days on horse-back, the women riding on pillions behind the men. There weren't scarcely any wagons round here then. People said 'Let's go to meeting,' they never said, 'Let us go to church.' There were to my knowledge never more than twenty or thirty at meeting at George's Hill. We never shifted our clothes on Sundays then. Everyone went to meeting just as they were. Once there was a young woman who put on her 'fancy fixings' and she made a regular show of herself before the whole congregation. George's Hill meeting house was not plastered inside. In those days they sometimes waited fifteen or twenty years before they were able to finish it off inside. There wasn't a stove in the town, and few of the houses were lathed or plastered inside. Everyone used to go to training the first Monday in May. General training came the first of October. For general training several towns would come together for the celebration and drill. Everyone took 'spirits' in those days." This statement of Mr. Roswell's recalls to my mind a story of my grandfather, Thomas Solley, about the funeral of a Mr. Hurd who lived in an old house on top of Mapletree Hill, opposite where my Grandfather Wood and Aunt Jane Munson lived, and where I visited in my boyhood. The old Hurd house was then standing, but was very much dilapidated. At the funeral of Mr. Hurd, "spirits" were freely partaken to warm the gloom of that solemn occasion. The clergyman of the day partook so freely that he could not command himself, and all he could say for the service was, "Come, it is time this

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man was in the ground." But then, as my Methodistical grandfather used to remark warmly, "He was an Episcopalian."

In this Housatonic valley region, of which the George's Hill settlement was the center, the Methodists were the leading religious denomination, and about every three miles through a long tract of country there were Methodist meeting houses. My grandfather and his first wife were very prominent Methodists in this region, grandfather being a class-leader. I have been told by several that his first wife, Melinda, was a very prominent exhorter at the Methodist meetings, and although she had an impediment in her speech, she used to "give in her testimony" and "exhort" in singing, when, to the wonder of all, she never stammered. My grandmother, Martha Treat Solley, had also been swept into the movement from the old Puritan Congregational church by the fervor of Methodism, and to the day of her death she wore the plain style of clothes of the early Methodists. My grandparents were always very regular attendants upon all religious services. I have heard my Grandmother Solley say that when they lived at Kettletown, grandfather would often take his little son, John Solley, on his back, and walk down the river three miles to Zoar, where there was another Methodist meeting house.

While I was talking with Mr. Roswell a very severe thunder shower "rolled up behind the moon," as he said, and so severe was the storm that it seemed as though we should have to remain for the night. The old gentleman's lamp of memory burned dim, and I turned from the past to a pretty little boy of Mrs. Mallory's playing on the floor, and spent the rest of the time telling him kindergarten stories. About six o'clock it cleared off, and we decided to drive over the mountains, past the old Hurd house, where Grandfather Wood once lived, with the famous pink quartz quarry beyond, on the Southford road, to South Britain, where we spent the night with my cousins, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur D. Munson. Here a warm welcome awaited us. We found their house to be the very



HOME OF THOMAS SOLLEY, SECOND.



OLD POSTOFFICE, STORE AND STAGE AT SOUTH BRITAIN.

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one to which Grandfather Solley moved from Kettletown, and we sat up till a late hour talking over the past.

The next day we started for George's Hill. We were told that the road led directly to the four corners at George's Hill where the old meeting house had been, and where the graveyard might be seen among its growth of bushes; but the road was so uninhabited that we got lost among the mountains, and finally came out again down on the Housatonic River road. We were well repaid, however, for "getting lost," for we learned something of the geography of the country and the minds of the early settlers, which we would not have otherwise learned. We found no less than four roads ascending from the Housatonic River road directly back up over the mountain into the towns of Southbury and Oxford. Some of these roads were deserted and scarcely ever used; some were steep and circuitous, and dangerous enough to satisfy even a Swiss mountaineer. All this seemed to delight my strong horse and driver, and we spent most of the afternoon roaming around over these mountain roads. At last we went back again to the deserted Roswell house at the corner of the George's Hill and Hull's Hill roads, and started again for George's Hill directly from my grandfather's old place, which I knew lay beyond up the mountain. It was very interesting, but a sad drive, for we found it a poor road, with many deserted places on either side. Once we found the ruins of an old blacksmith shop with a cedar tree growing out of the center of it. Again we found a strong old brick chimney with four fireplaces, standing complete, that neither time, nor change, nor storms, had made any impression upon, a monument to the efficiency of the old settlers. The other farms which were inhabited looked like those of the typical degenerate "ne'er do well" Yankee of the present day. But a surprise awaited us at the top. There we found a great fertile plateau with some very old farm houses. We had been directed to one owned by Mr. Frederick Gray, who, we were told, could tell us all about my grandfather and the past

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history of the region. To our disappointment we found Mr. Gray away, but Mrs. Gray directed us to the old cemetery. She being a second wife and not having lived many years in the region, could tell us but little we wished to know. We drove on to find the graveyard, but had another hunt before we found it. I had been told that it was so filled with bushes and trees that it would be hard to find. I struggled through one thicket only to be disappointed, but going a little farther we saw several gravestones standing out amidst a thick undergrowth. I was soon there hunting among the stones, and after some time I found the stone of Melinda Solley.

George's Hill graveyard had once been a well-kept, walled-in tract of about a quarter of an acre. It was in the opposite corner of the square lot upon which the old Methodist meeting house had once stood, whose foundations can even now be traced. In the other corner there had once been a dwelling house of which we found the remains of the cellar, the old well in good condition, and the inevitable lilac bush. The graveyard, which had been neglected for many years, had grown up once into a young forest which had been cut down by some ambitious Yankee, and the undergrowth from it was now well under way for a second forest. In the northwest corner of the yard I found the stone of my search. Here I read with some emotion this record:

IN
MEMORY OF
MELINDA, WIFE OF
THOMAS SOLLY,

WHO DIED
DECEMBER 30TH, 1834,
In the 30th year of her age.

Our sister the Heaven path gained,
Out-flying the tempest and wind.
Her rest she hath sooner attained,
And left her companions behind.

HIS DESCENDANTS

The stone of Melinda Solley was not broken, and it stood as nearly upright as any in the yard, but beside it lay one of the same size and kind, years ago turned over flat on the ground by the frost. What could this be? And to whom had it been raised? For years the rain had pelted its engraved surface, and it was nearly overgrown with moss. I bent over the stone in excitement and read these words at the top, which the moss had not covered:

IN
MEMORY OF
THOMAS SOLLEY,

I could read no more, for the moss had covered the rest of the stone with her clinging hand. All sorts of fancies flitted through my mind. To whom was this stone raised? My grandfather, Thomas Solley, had been an eccentric man. Was this one of the freaks of his eccentricity? Had he raised this stone to himself beside the grave of his beloved first wife, leaving the place for the inscription to be filled in later on, and was the fallen stone with its mossed front the symbol of the plans of men which go "aft agley?" for he now lay buried at Bethel, Connecticut. I studied the stone closely. I felt its surface, trying to divine with my sensitive fingers any unevenness on its face. Yes, there were other marks! With my pencil and finger, inch by inch, I worked over the stone until I could decipher this inscription:

WHO DIED
JUNE 1ST, 1829,
Aged 71 years.

My surprise could hardly be measured. I had found the grave of my great-grandfather, the first immigrant of that name to America. I doubt if anyone in America could have told me of his resting place. My search was being rewarded! It was a wonderful day. We lingered at the spot looking over other stones, and reading their inscriptions. But time was

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fleeing. I intended to reach Bethel that night, so we took leave of the quiet dead, and again drove down the mountain.

We had just passed Bennett's bridge on the Housatonic road going towards Sandy Hook, when some people with a horse and top buggy stopped and waited for us to come up and speak to them. It was Frederick H. Gray and his wife on their way to do some trading at Sandy Hook. Mr. Gray seemed very much interested in me and in my search. I quickly told him what I wanted and what I had discovered. I found him a man of more than ordinary intelligence, a well-preserved, fine-looking and erect specimen of the gentry of the old school. He had been a keen observer all his life, a man of great secretiveness and of few words; and what he said told. He possessed a great fund of information, and tasted the sweets of memory with evident pleasure. There we stood in the road, the ancient river with its Indian name chanting softly, while we talked of other days. Mr. Gray knew my grandfather, Thomas Solley, my great-grandfather, and other members of the family. He knew all about the settlement of the region, the early hand industries, and my grandfather's hat making, about which he gave clear accounts in reply to my rapid questioning. "I even have at home," said he, "one of the pot hats which your grandfather made in his shop." Here indeed was a veritable mine of information! "We wish you were coming to visit us," exclaimed Mrs. Gray. "I will next year, you may be sure," I answered. "But it will then be too late," said Mrs. Gray, "for we are closing out our affairs at George's Hill and moving to Ohio, where Mr. Gray has much property, to end our days there." I thanked them profusely for their courtesy and information, and reluctantly separated from them. Night was shutting in around us. "Why do you not tell them that you will go back and stay tonight with them?" said my driver, John Todd Andrews. "I told father that you would get so interested in this trip that you would not be back until the last of the week." My driver was giving voice to the thought of my own mind, so

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we reined up our horse until Mr. Gray should catch us up. As he came alongside I made known my desire, and we were heartily given leave to return and spend the night with them. We quickly turned our horse back towards George's Hill and began again to climb the mountain road. It was dark when we reached there, but Mr. Gray's "hired man" took charge of us while we waited for their return. After a hasty supper I again plied Mr. Gray with questions. In various ways I gathered this information.

The Methodist society moved from George's Hill to South Britain about fifty years ago, as that place became a village center, and the George's Hill settlement did not grow. Reverend Newton Tuttle of South Britain was the principal Methodist of those days, and attended my grandfather's first wife's funeral. The meeting house at George's Hill had served both for a church and a day school. Mr. Gray distinctly remembered my great-grandfather, Thomas Solley, who he said lived at the next house on the George's Hill road beyond my grandfather's, with the Landers family. He had a pension, and as long as he knew him he did no work. My grandfather, Thomas Solley, Jr., having married Melinda Landers, this is why his aged father lived there; it was all in the family. There were three members of the Landers family, Hawley, Edwin, and Melinda, whom my grandfather married. The two sons of the family were hatters by trade.

Of Thomas Solley's family he gave me this information. He could remember Julia Solley, who married Ransom Hinman; also Mercy Ann Solley, who married Aaron Davis; also Sally Solley, who married David Harris and had three children. None of these children were in the town of Easton list. David Harris, who married Sally Solley, lived in the house just east of the old house now owned by John Roswell. Harris was born in the house in which he lived.

The hat shop on my grandfather's farm was located near the Kettletown brook, where they had plenty of water which was used in the process of hat making. In the busy season he

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would employ as many as fifteen men, and at other times he might have only six or seven. In those days the proprietor of a hat shop boarded the apprentices. There was another hat shop up on the Kettletown road. There were also other hat shops about in South Britain in those early days. These shops were scattered about the country because then manufacturers did not group themselves in certain villages, as they have since. There were no railroads and one place was about as central as another. After my Grandfather Solley gave up the hat shop on the Kettletown brook, he moved to South Britain Centre, and the hat shop was run in turn by his brothers-in-law, David Harris and Ransom Hinman. Mr. Gray spoke with great respect of Thomas Solley, Jr. He remembered being with him once when he stopped a passing farmer to order some fresh lard. "You could always tell when Tom had money," he added, "for he was then so flush with it." Money was very scarce in those days.

Mr. Gray gave me some very interesting facts about the emigration to Ohio, which occurred after 1840. In those days a great many people of Connecticut emigrated to Ohio. Elijah Harris travelled to Ohio on foot carrying a pack of dry goods notions on his back, and selling them to pay his way. The two families of Walker Lyon and Stephen Harris took their families to Ohio in one ox-cart, a journey which took them six weeks. Their descendants now live out there in Morrow County. This brought to my mind some things that I had heard my grandmother, Martha Solley, tell about the Ohio immigration, and how she said once, "Your Grandfather Solley once caught the Ohio fever, so many of his friends were pulling up and going out there, but he never went. So many Connecticut people emigrated to Ohio in those days that the state was at first called New Connecticut."

It was ten o'clock and I saw that Mr. Gray was getting tired, so I said we would go to bed. I lingered a few minutes to talk with Mrs. Gray in the sitting room and look over family photographs. She seemed very much interested in

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my search, and in the conversation of the evening, and was evidently very much gratified that Mr. Gray could be of such service to me. "He has paid you a great compliment," she said, "in sitting up tonight, for he usually goes to bed right after supper."

At six o'clock the next morning John Todd and I were aroused by the ringing of a big brass bell. We were quickly up and dressed, for opportunities were too great to be lost. After breakfast Mr. Gray proposed a walk over his farm. George's Hill, which Mr. Gray's estate nearly covered, is about the highest land above the Housatonic River. Mr. Gray estimated it to be six hundred feet above the tide water of Long Island Sound. Half a mile from the house the view was so extensive that we seemed to be looking down on all the rest of the world. Away in every direction stretched the broken ridges of the Green Mountain range, while to the northwest on a clear day one can see the Catskill Mountains. All about us was as fine meadow lands as one could see anywhere in the state; everything in perfect order, walled in with heavy stone fences. I have never seen a finer farm. Mr. Gray told us that he could drive for two miles and not go off his own land. He could drive on the George's Hill road down to the Housatonic River all on his own property. Signs of prosperity were everywhere visible, and in the pasture lands there grazed both blooded stock and sheep. It was a tremendous contrast to the rest of the entire region. Here was a man as from some other nation and time! He seemed greatly delighted at our interest in his fine estate. He took some salt and went and cosseted his blooded stock. He led us to the highest point of land, where we watched the rising sun drive the river mists before him up the mountain ravines. Mr. Gray led us to the brow of a hill where rested in solitary grandeur a great mass of sandstone, which had been carved by wind and rain into a very fantastic shape. He told us that a great many people had been to see this stone, and a great many conjectures had been made as to its origin. He then led us

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down through the woods into a ravine to a fine stone quarry, with a road leading to it, all on his own estate. Here we swung ourselves from tree to tree down the cliff, the old gentleman always in the lead, and then went back to the house again through a wooded ravine upon his own private road. He told us that besides this great estate he owned six hundred acres in Connecticut, four hundred acres in Ohio, two hundred acres in Michigan, and one hundred sixty acres in Nebraska. Besides this he owned flour mills in Ohio, to which he made a business trip twice a year. "How have you been able to manage all this property in your single lifetime?" I exclaimed. "Why," said the stately old man, "what I have done, I have done well. That is all." Mr. Gray told us that he was born in New York city, that his mother sent him as a boy to South Britain, Connecticut, to school, in those days considered a fine place to educate a boy. His mother died when he was young, leaving her property in trust for him. Rather than spend that money, he hired himself out, according to the custom of the times, from the age of thirteen years until he was twenty-one, at four dollars a month, to Cyrus Tuttle, who lived on this very estate. In the course of time he married Mr. Tuttle's daughter, a most capable and efficient young woman. He went to live in his present house at George's Hill in 1833, and afterwards inherited the property from his father-in-law. Though now in his eighty-second year, age seemed to have told but little upon him. "I can drive a horse as well as you can," said he to John Todd Andrews, "and I have always done my own mowing with the machine until this year, when my son would not let me." As we made this interesting trip, Mr. Gray interspersed the conversation with quaint sayings. Speaking of horses being hard to manage and trying one's temper, he said, "A mad man and a mad horse, is two bad things to get together." He was very desirous that we should observe some fine stone walls near the house, which he told us he had built of huge boulders taken by oxen from the surrounding meadow. Some of these stones weighed as much as



G. W. SOLLEY AND E. J.
MORGAN AT THE GRAVE, 1909.

RESETTING THE GRAVESTONE
OF THOMAS SOLLEY, 1905.

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six tons, and were moved several rods with two yoke of cattle. One immense corner stone he moved with three yoke, and so exactly had he calculated it that one turn of the huge boulder had put it in the place where it had since lain. We looked astonished at the great wall, and when I asked him how he did it, he replied, "By knowing just what to do, and then doing it." Here was a man a whole biography of success in himself, a lesson stronger than a whole volume of sermons. A man who though isolated in a lonesome and difficult region to cultivate, upon the mountain top far removed from growing towns and cities, with no facilities of the railroads, or modern influences; who, although surrounded by change, degeneration and decay, and the trend of modern progress sweeping away from him, still kept good health, lived wholesomely, thought nobly; who had dared great things and accomplished them; whose life, in spite of hard things and disadvantages, had been a success. He had wrestled with the mountain and conquered!

I proposed to Mr. Gray that we take tools and go over to the graveyard and again set up the stone of Thomas Solley, the first settler of that name in America. He most kindly consented to do this, and led us to the spot. Here we cut away the bushes and weeds and Mr. Gray himself set the stone firmly and reverently in place. We then took a photograph of the place. This being done, we passed from stone to stone while Mr. Gray made comments. He told us that he had known every person buried there, and that according to the custom of ancient times, he had "set up" with many of them when they died, and attended their funerals. It was very interesting to hear him speak as of those who lived but yesterday, of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Treadwell, and of Abbey B. Latin, who lived with them, and who was buried beside her employers, as one of the family. Of the graves of the Clarks, and Aunt Dimey Clark, who died "in the faith of Christ, May 22nd, 1819." Of the stone of Leverett Hinman, more stately than the rest, with its carved weeping willow at the top. Of

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the three Harris children who died suddenly of scarlet fever, in those sad days when medical science had not told us what to do. Here in a group were four little stones, with their pathetic story which

“makes all the world akin.”

One of the stones had this inscription :

These lovely buds, so young and fair,
Called hence by early doom,
Just came to show how sweet a flower
In Paradise would bloom.

The graves of these children were covered with a thick growth of old-fashioned evergreen myrtle, which had carpeted all the yard around, and which he told us had been set there by the Harrises. Mr. Gray had “set up” with the Harris children, even though they had died of malignant disease.

In line with the grave of Melinda Solley, and that of my great-grandfather, was the stone of Lemuel Landers, evidently the father of Melinda, who died December 7, 1830, aged 57 years, 6 months ; so that the Harris, Landers, and Solley stones formed one family group by themselves. In one corner of the yard stood a stately stone with an inscription so unusual that I copied it.

ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF

MRS. SOPHIE TREADWELL,

WIFE OF MR. ROBERT TREADWELL, AND DAUGHTER OF

MR. JUSTIN AND MRS. MARY SMITH OF BRIDGEPORT,

WHO DIED FEBRUARY 27TH, 1808,
(eleven days after the birth of her second child)
in the twenty-first year of her age.

How lov'd, how valu'd once, avails thee not,
To whom related, or by whom begot.
A heap of dust alone remains of thee,
'Tis all thou art,—and all that *Proud* shall be.

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Oh, the irony of Fate! To be of noble family, to have moved from a thriving center to the lonesome mountain top, only to find a tragic death, and then to have a community's prejudice against one better favored than one's self carved in stone!

As we walked back to the house to get our horse and start homeward, I reminded Mr. Gray that he had not given me the hat which my grandfather had made. Of this one thing he seemed reticent, telling me that I might go to the attic and seek it myself. With the hired man and a lamp I mounted the stairs and searched among cobwebbed relics of the past for some time, but found no hat. Going down stairs I told Mrs. Gray and then went out to the barn where the horse was being harnessed. Mr. Gray asked me if I had found the hat, and replied to my answer, that "it was surely there somewhere," when his wife's voice from the window loudly exclaimed, "*You* go, father! Go get the hat for Mr. Solley." Again I mounted the ancient attic stairs, this time with Mr. Gray and the lamp, and after hunting some time he drew forth the hat from an old chest under the rafters. It was battered and out of shape, but still showed signs of its ancient art. An immense stove-pipe hat of the type seen in the portraits of Daniel Webster, well trimmed with silken bands and linings. Mr. Gray declared that my Grandfather Solley had come to this house about 1852 and measured the head of Mr. Tuttle, his father-in-law, for a "best hat." The hat cost five dollars and was trimmed by Polly Ann Tuttle, the daughter of the old preacher Tuttle, who preached the funeral sermon of Melinda Solley. What a troop of scenes and fancies it brought upon Memory's stage! Mr. Gray seemed related to me then and there, at least by apostolical succession. He had shown me my great-grandfather; he had again raised the stone to his memory; he had personally known my grandfather, Thomas Solley, Jr.; he had told me about Sally, Julia, and Mercy Ann Solley, sisters of my grandfather, together with their matrimonial alliances; he had boarded Melinda Solley's

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only son, George Solley, for whom I had been named by my own father; after the tragic death of Sally Solley Harris's children he had "sat up" with their remains; he had brought to life the preacher of the funeral sermons, and the daughter who trimmed hats in my grandfather's shop. All of these people had become living, actual beings to me, and now he had presented me with my grandfather's hat!

I had learned much; I had enjoyed more! With cordial good-byes and with sincere wishes that Mr. and Mrs. Gray might round out the century happily in their new home in Ohio, we departed with a great bunch of wild flowers at the dashboard of our buggy.

My SEARCH FOR AN ANCESTOR had been well rewarded! But there still remained to be discovered the origin of Thomas Solley in Old England, the tragedy which lay behind him, and the reason for the strong characteristics with which he had marked his descendants in America, together with the lives and works of his descendants in the land of his exile or adoption. And Eunice Duffee is still a mystery. But this constitutes another chapter.



AND THE HAT!

CHAPTER III.

THE FINDING OF EUNICE DUFFEE.

MY researches and studies in family history had been dropped for a number of years. I had not lost interest, but I had discovered no more clues, and other things had claimed my attention and time. Then, too, the work lacked impulse, as I had now no descendants to take any interest in what I had accomplished.

During the winter of 1909 I received a letter out of a clear sky which made me literally "sit up and take notice." The letter was as follows:

Bridgeport, Ct., Feb. 20, 1909.

REV. GEO. W. SOLLEY,
Fitchburg, Mass.

DEAR SIR: Your father, Mr. David Solley of Bethel, Ct., has kindly given me your address as one who could assist me in my family records.

I am the son of Russell Plumb Morgan of this city, grandson of the late Russell Morgan of this city, who married Polly Solley.

Polly was daughter of Thomas and Eunice Solley, therefore Polly was my grandmother, and Eunice my great-grandmother.

Thomas was a pensioner of the Revolutionary War, and I desire to get as much of the family records as possible.

Polly and her mother Eunice are both buried here in the Russell Morgan lot in Mountain Grove Cemetery, and the Daughters of the Revolution put a flag on these graves annually.

If you incur any expense in copying records, etc., let me know and I will pay you for same.

If you wish any reference from me you can write my Rector, Rev. E. H. Kenyon, this city, or First National Bank, or any one here.

Thanking you in advance for reply at your convenience and hoping you will look me up if you ever come this way.

Very truly yours,

EDWARD J. MORGAN.

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Here at last was Eunice Duffee, the child wife of Thomas Solley, the first settler of that name in America, buried almost in the center of a small radius of towns which had been the arena of the life and activities of most of their descendants of that name, since Thomas Solley, the soldier, had married Eunice Duffee, December 13, 1781, at Stratford, Connecticut.

After this, a voluminous correspondence was carried on between Edward J. Morgan and myself, both of us taking the same vital interest in the story of Thomas and Eunice Solley. We exchanged the information which we had been able to secure, and each furnished the other with many "missing links." I had now found another clew in a descendant about my own age, and just the same distance removed from Thomas and Eunice Solley. Hope sprang up like flowers along the pathway of my "search for an ancestor," and I took up my task anew.

Our frequent correspondence during the winter and spring of 1909 worked Edward Morgan and myself up to such a pitch that nothing would satisfy either of us but a meeting, and going over together the things which so much interested us. He very much desired also to travel with me all the route which I had taken over those Southbury Hills, when I discovered the grave of the first Thomas Solley; but we were both busy men. Finally in May, as the flowers were beginning to bloom, I received the following letter which made me decide to start for Bridgeport at an early date:

Bridgeport, Conn., May 13th, 1909.

REV. GEO. W. SOLLEY,
Fitchburg, Mass.

DEAR COUSIN: Permit me to call your attention to the fact that the merry month of May is rapidly going from us, that the weather is delightful, the roads for automobiling are in fine shape, the clams are ripe, and everything ready and waiting for you and your good wife to name the day when you will arrive here.

Next month I will be more or less engaged so that I cannot say where I will be or what I can do.

HIS DESCENDANTS

I am generally at above office during business hours and at my home, 285 East Main St., at other times—a short walk.

You can phone me at either place if you arrive unexpectedly. Now it's up to you, the whole Solley family history is waiting.

With regards,

Very truly yours,

E. J. M.

On May 25th I was met at the railroad station at Bridgeport, Connecticut, by my cousin, Edward J. Morgan, with his big red automobile, who welcomed me with open arms. Two descendants of Thomas and Eunice had come together; two distinct lines, one from Polly, born August 15, 1797, and the other from Thomas, born April 16, 1800, after a separate existence of over a hundred years, having had little knowledge of each other, had at last come together at a place hardly a stone's throw from where Eunice was born and married, and where the descendants of Thomas and Eunice had been rearing families and making history for over one hundred years, where we were now to find that Eunice lay buried; and there we stood, smiling into each other's faces, and seeming to understand each other as though we had never been apart.

A hasty lunch was soon taken together, and then we were whizzing through the streets of Bridgeport, our tongues going almost as swiftly as the automobile wheels themselves. We determined to see everyone, and visit every place which was in any way connected with the name Solley or Duffee. We first visited R. Plumb Morgan, the father of Edward, who was living a retired life with his daughter, in a pretty house in one of the now most crowded portions of the old city, and opposite the once palatial house which P. T. Barnum built for "Gen. Tom Thumb" in the days of his popularity. I found Mr. Morgan a quiet, gentle old man, and tenderly cared for, but one who had been for years out of the whirl of the busy city in which he lived. He recalled the past with some difficulty, but from our conversation, I took down the following reminiscences.

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"Eunice Solley was my grandmother. I remember her when I was a small boy, for at that time she lived with my father and mother. She died in 1840, when I was still quite young, so that my memories of her are only those of a child. She was rather short, and consumptive looking, and kept to her room most of the time. The children of our family used to go by turns to her room and tell her stories. She seemed very cheerful, and jolly, and liked to have the children entertain her."

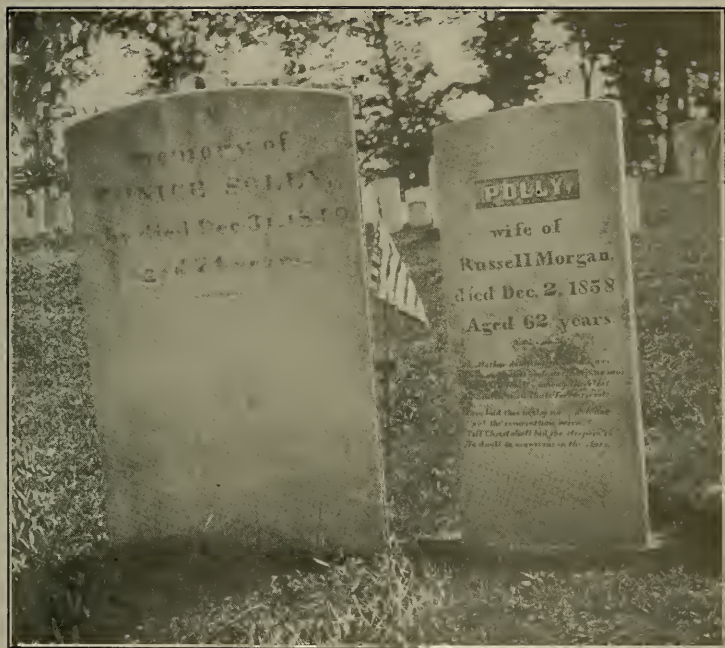
"Her daughter Polly was my mother. She was a stout woman who was also of very cheerful nature, and she laughed a good deal."

"There is a tradition of one John Bennett, a traveller at sea, who used to visit my father, Russel Morgan, at Bridgeport, when I was a child. There is also a tradition that Thomas Solley first tried to correspond with his people in England, but he received no answer."

Taking Edward's sister with us, and some flowers, we next started for Mountain Grove Cemetery, which is the largest and most beautiful in this section of Connecticut. The day was one of rare beauty, the air was lilac laden and rhythmic with the song of birds, and as the big automobile rolled us quietly around the curves of the older part of this great "city of the dead," it was with feelings of both reverence and gratitude that we stopped before the stately row of stones in the Russel Morgan lot. A plain marble slab at the extreme left of the row was inscribed as follows:

IN
MEMORY OF
EUNICE SOLLY
WHO DIED DEC. 31, 1840
Age 74 years.

Within a few feet in the same row was the stone raised to the memory of Eunice's daughter Polly:



GRAVES OF EUNICE DUFFEE SOLLEY AND POLLY
SOLLEY MORGAN, AT BRIDGEPORT.

HIS DESCENDANTS

POLLY

WIFE OF

RUSSEL MORGAN

DIED DEC. 2, 1858.

Aged 63 yrs.

Ah, mother dear thy pains are oer,
Thou ne'er shall sigh nor weep no more.
Thy spirit dwells among the blest
In Heaven thou shall forever rest.

We decorated these graves with flowers, while the flag placed on Eunice's grave by the Daughters of the American Revolution waved a silent approval of our deed.

Here again another object of my search was now accomplished. For here lay all that was mortal of Eunice Duffee, the American maiden who, so early in her teens, had fallen in love with Thomas Solley, the lonesome boy soldier, a deserter from King George's army, an alien from his native land, cut off by more than three thousand miles of distance from his people and the land of his birth, which he was never to see nor hear from again—Thomas Solley, our strange, silent, and almost unknown ancestor, with some great secret which he had ever kept close within his aching heart, and which even now lay buried with him in that lonely grave upon George's Hill, so typical of himself, deserted and hidden among the trees for almost a century.

Here at last I had found the grave of the mother of all our line of Solleys in America. Here she lay buried among those whom she loved, and here the third generation of two lines of her descendants had met and stood silently to do her honor.

We finished the day touring in the automobile through the suburbs of Bridgeport, taking in Black Rock, where George T. Solley had once lived, and calling upon Captain and Mrs. George Penfield. The captain said he knew that I was a Solley the minute he saw me, for he recognized

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the Solley look. Then skirting the sea round Pearsall's Hill, into Fairfield, we visited the grave of George T. Solley, and then we turned towards home. Here we found Edward's wife awaiting us, together with a splendid dinner, and the rector of St. Paul's Episcopal church and his wife were there to honor the occasion. So closed a memorable day, one never to be forgotten. I HAD FOUND EUNICE DUFFEE!



HOME OF GEORGE T. SOLLEY,
BLACK ROCK, BRIDGEPORT.

OLD METHODIST MEETING-
HOUSE, ZOAR BRIDGE.

OLD HAT SHOP CELLAR HOLE AT KETTLETOWN,
IN 1905 AND 1909.

CHAPTER IV.

AN AUTOMOBILE TRIP OF RESEARCH AND DISCOVERY.

I SPENT the rest of the week of May 25, 1909, with Edward Morgan and his wife at Bridgeport, Connecticut. We crowded the days full, visiting places connected with the Solley family and their descendants, and talking about the traditions in which we were both so much interested. I do not here give a detailed account of the events of this memorable week—they would fill a book—but simply record from my notes the things which are of value in my search for an ancestor.

On Wednesday morning, May 26, we started out on a long tour with the automobile to see as many places as possible connected with the Solley family. We first visited Mrs. Eunice Booth, an old lady who now lives with her daughter, Mrs. George H. Tomlinson, at Oronoque, a place just above old Stratford, Connecticut. Here we found the old lady resting quietly in her room, waiting for release from the flesh, like her grandmother, Eunice, before her. She brightened up as she saw us, and the flowering red geraniums in her window made a very pretty picture as we set the fires of memory burning on that bright May morning. The house was of the large, square French style, with cupola, such as were built in the late sixties and seventies. In it were living at that time four generations, and the estate had been held by the Tomlinson family for over two hundred years. It was full of old furniture and family keepsakes, the most valuable of which was an elegant old haircloth sofa which once belonged to Governor Gideon Tomlinson, of Greenfield, Connecticut. The members

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of the family took great pleasure in showing us about the place, displaying with much pride an old flint-lock gun which had done service in the American Revolutionary War. The gun belonged to Jabez Huntington Tomlinson, who guarded Major Andre the night before he was shot. It was somewhat difficult to secure information from Mrs. Booth, on account of her infirmity, but we gathered the following facts with the aid of her daughter, Mrs. Tomlinson.

"My grandmother, Eunice Solley, wife of Thomas the first, was a rather tall woman, but not stout." (All the others have called her rather short.) "She lived with my father and mother when I was a child, and was supported by a pension which she received from the government on account of her husband's service in Washington's army. As I was named after her, she used to give me each year a silver dollar in honor of my name. That was a wonderful present in those days. My mother Polly was a fleshy woman, like her brother Thomas, and was called very handsome in her day. She had black eyes, and hair which kept its color as long as she lived. She thought that Thomas the first wrote to England to make connections with his people, but they never answered. She said that Thomas the first was taken as a school boy, with others, while at play, and pressed into the English military service to go to America and fight in the Revolutionary War. As she remembered her grandmother Eunice, she was a great Methodist (she was a Baptist), and could sing with great vigor her Methodist hymns after she was seventy years of age. She remembered going to Kettletown, Connecticut, to visit the Landers and Thomas Solley second. She thought her grandmother, Eunice, lived at Kettletown, until the death of Thomas first, when she went to live with Russel Morgan at Bridgeport. Her grandmother, Eunice, had old-fashioned consumption or bronchitis. She died very suddenly. Getting up from the table, she said to her children, 'I am dying,' and passed on without a word."

Eunice Booth was supposed to look like her mother Polly,

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but I could see no resemblance to the Solleys, either in looks or in characteristics. Probably she took more after the Morgan side of the family. Mrs. Booth also remembered one John Bennett, who was called "Burkie" as a nickname. He had gone to sea and there were all sorts of stories about his sea-faring life, but she could give no further information concerning him. Was his mother a Duffee, a sister of Eunice, who had married a Bennett?

From Orinoque we travelled swiftly over the fine state roads, through the towns of Shelton and old Derby (formerly Birmingham), where we took dinner at the hotel. Then we started up the old Housatonic River road towards Southbury and Kettletown. This old road, following the singing river of Indian name, we found in the same primitive condition which it must have been when Thomas and Eunice Solley travelled over it themselves years ago. I understand that these roads are farmed out for a small pittance to any farmer who will look after them, which is the way it used to be when as a child I visited my aged Grandfather Wood at Hull's Hill, Southbury, the district just above Kettletown, where my grandfather, Thomas Solley second, together with his brother-in-law, Ransom Hinman, the Harrises, and the Landers, were all engaged in making hats by hand.

We had to make the journey cautiously over the uneven roads, but the air was heavy with the scent of evergreens, and fragrant with the great clumps of lilacs which clustered around the old forsaken cellar holes. The sand banks above the river were embroidered with sand pinks and lupines, while great masses of boxwood bloom crowned the sand banks, and nodded at us from every turn in the ancient winding river road. The land looked as though it were arrayed for some splendid bridal, while the Indian river furnished the music for the occasion.

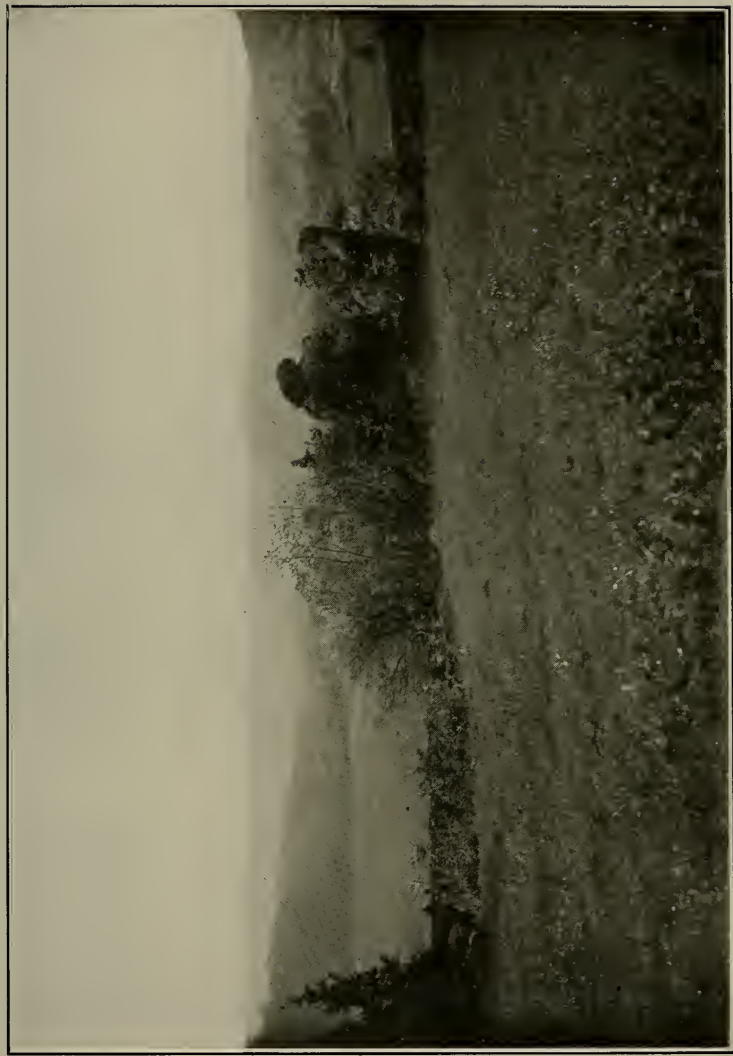
We stopped the automobile to go over deserted houses which we passed on the road. We gathered great masses of lilacs from the cellar holes, where once mighty old fam-

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ilies had been reared, and we stopped at the little old Methodist meeting house at Zoar Bridge, which all the Solleys had once attended, to look at its quaint interior, and take photographs. Then we headed for Kettletown.

We visited the old Thomas Solley place at Kettletown, which we found, alas! had now been bought up by some modern syndicate and stripped of all its picturesqueness. The old farm had recently been bought by Hendricks, the largest manufacturer of bird cages in the world. The place and much of the surrounding country had been fenced in and turned into a sort of game preserve. We again photographed the cellar hole of my grandfather's old hat shop. Then we headed for George's Hill. This road we found was the roughest and most unused of all that we had passed over, and it was with great difficulty that the automobile was steered along its water-gullied and little-used surface. Only once did we see any signs of living beings—then two pitiful-looking creatures in a field stopped their work to stare at the unusual vision of an automobile in their deserted region. The country seemed more forlorn than when I first visited it, and arriving at the top of George's Hill, it was again with some difficulty that we found the little forgotten graveyard, which had again grown up to bushes and trees. Leaving the automobile to cool, we clambered through the bushes to the grave of Thomas Solley and Melinda Landers, which we decorated with the flowers which we had gathered along our journey.

The view from George's Hill is quite an open one. The land there is so good it has never ceased to be farmed, so it has not grown up to a wilderness, as so much of the country in that region has. The view from the old church corner is unrivaled. One looks for miles as far as the eye can reach, over a most diversified country of hills and valleys and mountain ranges, piled one against another until they reach the sky. They seem to rest there under the sunlight, waiting to be discovered. I have travelled New England all over, and have never seen a more extended or beautiful view any-



GEORGE'S HILL, FROM SOUTH BRITAIN SIDE.

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where, outside of the Connecticut River valley from Mounts Tom and Holyoke, in Massachusetts. If one approaches George's Hill from the Southbury side, the roads are not so difficult, or so rough, or so steep; and it was probably at first settled from that point. As it is, it is only waiting to be discovered by the lovers of nature, who are now going back to the soil, and then it will become all that our ancestors expected when they settled upon its height, almost a century ago.

From George's Hill we went to South Britain, whither our ancestors years before us had gone, and taken the village with them. Here we visited my cousin, Arthur D. Munson, and his most hospitable wife, who, at a very short notice, had us seated at a table laden with good things. Then we descended to the Housatonic valley, where we crossed the river and mounted the hills toward Newtown.

We had had a busy day, and now we headed the automobile towards home, intending to reach Bridgeport by way of Newtown. As we came into the village of Sandy Hook, I remembered that Mercy Ann Solley had married a Davis, and settled there. Inquiring of a stately old gentleman, a Mr. Taylor, proprietor of the inn, who was standing in front of the big general store of the village, I found that one of her daughters, Mrs. Sarah Davis Glover, was still living there with her descendants. We easily found her, and upon making ourselves known, received a more than cordial welcome, and although the sun warned us of the lateness of the hour, by painting the sky in brilliant hues, we invited Mrs. Glover into the automobile, and talked with her for about an hour. She said, "I was very fond of my mother and have been very much interested in the Solley family. Before I was married I was always with mother and we talked together a great deal. My mother had eleven children. I am supposed to look like my mother, who was a large woman with a round face." And indeed it was very easy for us to trace the likeness. She brought out from the house a picture of her mother, Mercy Ann Solley,

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which confirmed her words. Indeed she is the first one whom we met on this trip who bore any striking likeness to the Solley family. She said that she remembered distinctly things about her grandfather and grandmother, Thomas and Eunice. She said that Thomas was never well and did such things as he could around home, wove linen, and she thought she still possessed some pieces which he wove, which had come down to her. Eunice was a small woman, whom she thought Julia Solley looked most like. Thomas and his wife were great Methodists, and she told a story of Thomas the first walking to church the Sunday before he died. She also gave this tradition, that Thomas was great for story-telling, and that he was telling an old war story of the American Revolution when he died sitting in his chair. Her family had kept the memory of old Weston, Connecticut, so green, that her brothers Daniel and William had gone back there to live.

She remembered distinctly the story about John Bennett, and thought his mother was a sister to Eunice Duffee. He was a sailor, and froze his hands while at sea, which took the ends of his fingers off. She remembered his visiting her mother at Sandy Hook, and told how his working with his maimed hands had attracted them as children. She also gave this curious traditional story. Thomas the first saw the Duffees on board ship as he was coming to America. He fell in love with Eunice, then a mere girl, and followed her to Southbury, where he found her milking a cow. This is the only time that we have heard this story, and I very much doubt its reliability. Its only value is in its hint that Thomas first saw Eunice, and fell in love with her, while he was in the British service.

Mrs. Glover said, "Grandfather Thomas Solley also made baskets and ox-bows, and would get up a load, and be gone a week or two selling them. I have a table which was owned by him. It was given to my mother and father, and is now down in my cellar. Father and Mother Davis lived for a time in Weston, and then moved to Sandy Hook.

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"Mother had letters from England about the Solley family up to about one year before her death, which is about twenty-two years ago. I had one about ten years ago. Mother and I talked with Lawyer Wilson about the matter and he said he would look into it and see what could be done. Thomas Solley came over here once from Bethel, and talked about the letters and the people in England. The idea seemed to be that there was money over there awaiting for the right claimant, but nothing came of it in my day.

"We lost most of our things in a fire some years ago, so that I can not give you any clearer information. Any letters and papers which we had from England were destroyed at that time." (Lawyer Wilson, we found, had also passed away.)

Night had fully settled down around us when we had finished talking with our newly-found cousin, Sarah Davis Glover, who was also the same distance removed from Thomas and Eunice as ourselves. We then headed for Bridgeport, after lighting the lamps on the big automobile.

We passed through the towns of Newtown, Botsford, Stepney, and Long Hill, the stars giving us an increasing light as we saw the lamps in the farm houses go out, one by one, and all was still along those beautiful country roads, where we rarely met a person or a team. We arrived at Edward's home not long after nine o'clock. There the watchful house mother met us with a warm welcome and a bountiful supper.

We had found in Mrs. Glover one whose interest in our researches was to continue many a day. For months after this visit, I carried on a correspondence with her which afforded me great pleasure and profit. She furnished me with photographs of both Julia and Mercy Ann Solley, as well as some of their descendants. Her sweet, trustful and sincere spirit was one of the choicest things which we found in our hunt for an ancestor.

Thursday, May 27, after lunching at the famous Algonquin Club, we started out in the rain by the electric car to find my old friend, Frederick Gray, who, we accidentally learned,

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

had returned from the West with his wife, and was living with one of his daughters, a Mrs. Griffin, at Derby, Connecticut. We easily found Mr. Gray, who was then in his eighty-eighth year. He was delighted to see us, but we learned nothing new from him, other than the account which I secured years ago at George's Hill.

We were to have one more delightful trip together. The weather continued glorious, and taking Mrs. Morgan with us in the automobile, we headed for the towns of Easton and Weston. We first visited Beardsley Park, then the factory village at North Bridgeport (formerly called Pequonock), with which the Morgan branch of the family had been interested and long connected, and we inspected and photographed the old stone church, the old Morgan house, etc. From there, after hours of touring about, we continued on our journey. A severe thunder shower rolling up as we entered Weston, we took refuge in the village store and postoffice of Sheriff Merwin, where we lunched off crackers and cheese, while the rain fell without. The weather clearing, we started out again, having secured no information of any note, and headed for Redding Ridge, visiting the Aspetuck cemetery and looking over gravestones. Again we were overtaken by a tremendous shower, when two storms came together, and we took refuge in the house and barn of a deserted farm near Redding Ridge. The rain fell in torrents, and it seemed as though it would never stop. But the heavens emptied themselves, the sun came out, and we started again for the old Caleb Morgan place in Wolfpits, between Redding Ridge and Bethel. Here we found the Misses Flora D. and Laura F. Morgan awaiting our coming. They kindly took us over the delightful old home, which had been in possession of the family since the first Caleb Morgan had settled there, showing with special delight the ancient flower garden beside the house, with its fruits and flowers.

The day was beginning to wane, but Edward Morgan still had a stent to accomplish before he should bring his wife



JOHN G. LEWIS' HOME, BRIDGEPORT.
AUTOMOBILE AND R. PLUMB MORGAN,
AGE 78, IN 1910.

OLD MONASTERY CHAPEL, NORTH BRIDGEPORT,
(CHURCH OF NATIVITY).

TWO VIEWS OF OLD FLOWER GARDEN AT CALEB MORGAN PLACE, WOLFPITS.

HIS DESCENDANTS

back to take supper with the Morgan girls at the home of his ancestors. Taking Miss Flora Morgan with us, we started over the hills toward my old home at Bethel. Here we found my father and mother awaiting us. Pictures were taken of the old place and then an automobile load of us went over to the cemetery to see the grave of Thomas second, where again we took photographs, and decorated the graves in the Solley family lot. We went back swiftly to my old home, where after many good-byes, like happy children, we all separated, I to stop for a while with my parents, while the Morgans went back to Wolfpits and the bountiful supper which awaited them there. Thus ended one of the best trips of my life, into which had been crowded more knowledge and enjoyment than any since I had started out on my hunt for an ancestor.

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE MORGAN POINT OF VIEW.

FROM the many letters written me by Edward J. Morgan, which were crowded both with facts and fancies about Thomas and Eunice and their descendants, I have culled the following statements which throw light upon their history. They are interesting as coming from his own family line and point of view. Some of the statements, both historical and traditional, follow identically my own findings. Some are incomplete, while others are peculiar to his own branch of the family. The statements I find very considerable in detail:

THOMAS SOLLEY, born in England in 1758.

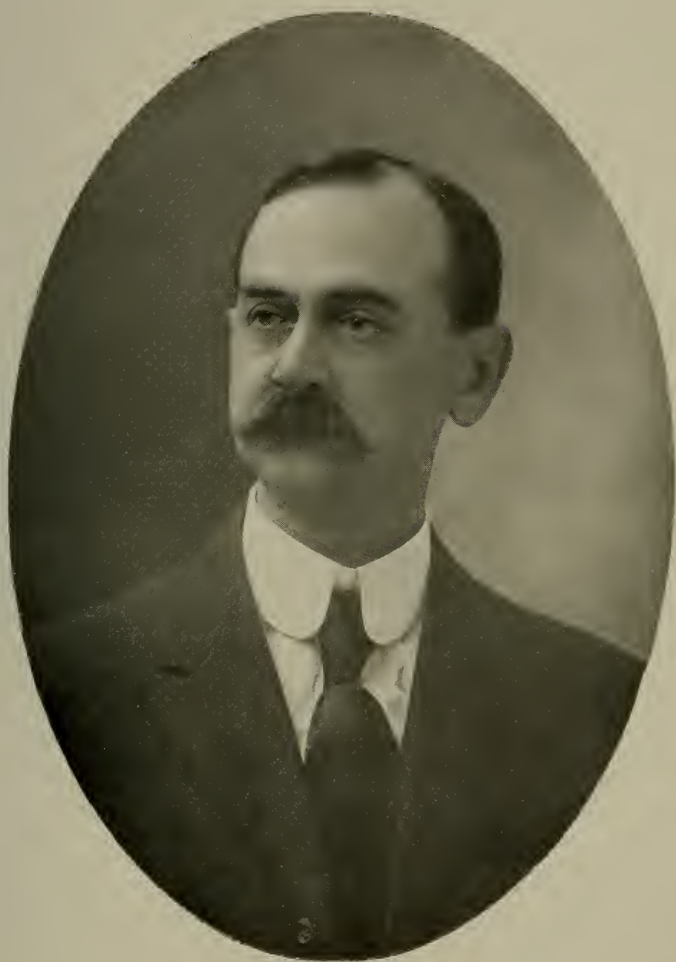
When quite a young man, with coat off, playing a game of pitching quoits near his home, with two others, the party were all seized by what was then known as the "press gang," and they were impressed into the service of the King's army, without their consent or their parents' knowledge.

This was customary at that time, and such young men were not enlisted or drafted, or even permitted to say good-bye to their people, or even allowed to put on their coats.

We next hear of Thomas as a soldier on duty on the north side of Long Island, when he and several others made their escape in a row-boat, crossed the Long Island Sound, and landed near Fairfield, Connecticut.

They were pursued and scattered, Thomas hid in the bushes of a swamp where the briars were thick, and the soldiers could not find him. The soldiers fired promiscuously into the bushes. Thomas put up his hand to move a briar that hurt him, and had the end of his finger shot off.

Thomas worked at odd jobs, chopping wood, and at such occu-



EDWARD JUCKET MORGAN.

THOMAS SOLLEY

pations as he could get to make a living in the vicinity, and finally enlisted in the Continental Service as a private. (See his war record.)

It is interesting to note from the records that Thomas Solley applied for a pension in March, 1818, and was then 60 years of age. He died in 1829, eleven years later, and was therefore 71 years of age. He married in 1781, and must have been 23 years old at that time. Eunice, his widow, was born December 25, 1766, married him December 13, 1781, she being at that time twelve days under fifteen years of age. She died December 31, 1840, aged seventy-four.

The children of Thomas and Eunice Solley were Thomas, Jr., whose record appears on another page; then there was supposed to be a Henry, who was in the East India coast trade, or some similar line, and supposed to have been lost at sea. Polly, who married Russel Morgan, whose record appears elsewhere. Russell and Polly had eleven children.

Polly Solley, born August 15, 1797, died December 2, 1858, aged sixty-one years and three months. Was the only daughter of Thomas and Eunice Solley as far as we know. She married Russel Morgan.

THOMAS SOLLEY (Private and sergeant in Revolutionary War).

A pensioner under Act 1818, folio 637, indexed under name of *Saulley*. He was born in England, 1758, and died at Southbury, Connecticut, June 4, 1829. See Revolutionary record on another page.

Thomas married Eunice Dorfee at Stratford, Connecticut, December 13, 1781. As he deserted his king's army, and enlisted under Washington's command, it is supposed that he was ashamed to open communication with his people in England, or that they would not have anything to do with him.

Eunice Dorfee, his wife, was the daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Dorfee of Stratford, Connecticut. She was born in Stratford, Christmas day, 1766, married at the early age of fifteen, and died in Bridgeport, December 31, 1840, age seventy-four years. She was buried in what was then known as the old Division Street burying ground. This is now Park Avenue and Cottage Street, and is completely built up. Her ashes were moved to the new or Mountain Grove Cemetery, Bridgeport, and buried in the Russel Morgan lot there. The Daughters of the American Revolution place a flag on this grave annually.

Eunice received a pension after Thomas died, which is said to have been \$96 per year. She made her home in the latter part of her life with her daughter Polly, who married Russel Morgan, and assisted in bringing up their children.

Thomas and Eunice were married December 13, 1781, after he had enlisted in January, 1781. Although Thomas died June 4, 1829,

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Eunice did not apply for her widow's pension till later, and it was not executed till October 4, 1836, about seven years after the death of the soldier. We think possibly she was not entitled to it at the time the soldier died. It may have been a later pension act.

Mrs. Booth, daughter of Polly Solley Morgan, living at Oronoque, Stratford, Connecticut, with her daughter, Mrs. Tomlinson, says she thinks the Solleys were all Methodists, and she can remember stories about the burning of the old Methodist church at Fairfield by the British soldiers. The people took their valuables, papers, pork, lard, vegetables, etc., into the church for safety, thinking they would spare the church. But it was all burned up, and the road ran with grease from the pork so it was over your shoes. (See history of Fairfield, pages 387-8-9, July 6, 1779.)

The following letter from Edward J. Morgan, received in April, 1909, shows the line of researches which we were both following. We were both on the trail after Eunice Solley's maiden name, which we found spelled in three ways, Duffee, Dorfee, Durfee. And also the name of Bennett, a family name surrounded with misty traditions in connection with our family.

It was very interesting for me to find that the descendants of Thomas and Eunice, through the line of Polly, had the same tradition of a John Bennett as we had in our own line, through Thomas second. I had been told all my life that the Solleys were related to the noted Dr. Ezra Bennett of Danbury, Connecticut, and that he was a connection of my great-grandmother, Eunice Solley, but how, no one seemed able to explain. At this time with this new interest aroused, I wrote to what living connections of the Danbury Bennetts I could find, but could obtain no information whatever. I visited George Henry Hickok of Bethel, Connecticut, whose family had been very intimate with the Bennetts, and to whom he was related on his mother's side, but he could give me no information. The connection of the Bennetts with Eunice Duffee still remains a mystery. I select the following letter from our pile of correspondence, as one of the most interesting:

HIS DESCENDANTS

Bridgeport, Conn., April 17th, 1909.

REV. GEO. W. SOLLEY,

DEAR COUSIN: Please accept my thanks for your kind letters and photo of yourself, and of Thomas Solley second. Since I wrote you last I have been busy building a new shop, and have made no progress worth mentioning. I have asked my father, Russell Plumb Morgan, to try and give me some clew to the Eunice Durfee family, or of the Bennett family that we had reason to believe were related to her. My sister has visited my Aunt Eunice Booth at Oronoque, between Stratford and Derby, but no success. Although they are thinking about it, I fear there is "nothin' doin'."

Father recollects a sailor man as Cousin Bennett, whom he thinks was also termed "Cousin John." He frequently visited his home. He recollects particularly of one, being cast ashore in some forgotten place, and meeting one or more men with only one eye, and that located in the center of the head, directly above the nose. Father used to ask him to repeat that story, as it made an impression on him.

Now if you can connect the sailor, John Bennett, with any of your other characters, we may get a clew, the same as I have traced you out. It occurs to me that some genealogy of the Bennett family may be published, and possibly larger libraries have a catalogue of all works of this character.

It may interest you to know that I am a Son of the American Revolution, and our local branch is getting plans for a monument* to be erected in Compo Beach, near Westport, Connecticut, where the British landed when they marched to Danbury, in fact we propose to mark out the entire course† through to Danbury, and the return back through Ridgefield to Compo Beach again, as I believe this was the first real fight in Connecticut, and several were killed on both sides. We have secured an old cannon from the United States government to place at Compo Beach, as we find this to be quite a historic spot.

My daughter Edna is at Mount Ida School, at Newton, near Boston, and I am writing her about the "Morgan" memorial at Boston, so that she may become interested, etc.

Hoping to hear from you soon with definite date of your promised visit, when we will take these threads up in proper order.

Yours very truly,

EDWARD J. MORGAN.

*This monument, "The Minute-Man, was dedicated Bunker Hill day, June 17, 1910.

†This route lies over Hoyt's Hill at Bethel, Connecticut, and Thomas second bought the old homestead there, at the foot of this hill, which may have been standing when the British soldiers marched past. David Treat Solley has always lived there. I was born there.

G. W. S.

THOMAS SOLLEY

From the correspondence of Edward J. Morgan with Mrs. Arthur C. Bradley, wife of the town clerk of Weston, we find a little discrepancy pertaining to some of the dates of Thomas and Eunice Solley and their children, as the following record taken from one of her letters shows:

Thomas Solley, born August 14, 1759 . . . We have 1758.
Eunice Duffee, born December 27, 1767 . We have Dec. 25, 1766.
Married December 13, 1782 We have 1782.
John, born April 26, 1788
Elizabeth, born June 25, 1794 We have June 21.
Polly *hsermeshe*, born August 15, 1797 . .

The word in italics is as near as it can be deciphered.

But the strangest thing of all which has attracted our attention more than anything we have found in the Weston town records, is the curious "middle name" which we find attached to that of Polly—"hsermeshe," of which the illustration is a tracing made in pencil by Mrs. Bradley, from the town record.

Edward Morgan searched through all the libraries at his command for some explanation of the name. He also had people searching for him in the library at Yale University, and at Boston, Massachusetts. I also consulted Historian George Sheldon of old Deerfield, who is an authority on colonial antiquities; but from no source have we been able to secure any reasonable explanation of what the word "hsermeshe" means. All sorts of conjectures have been made about it. Some have thought it was a Bible name; others that it was "her mark." Some seemed to think it was just an ordinary mistake made by the poor spellers of those days. One even thought that it was a Greek word, or an Indian name. It remains for time to solve the riddle for us.

Polly Sherman Polley on August 15 1797

THE STRANGE SIGNATURE.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NAMES SOLLEY AND DUFFEE.

I HAVE not found much difference in the spelling of the name Solley, but I note some things of interest. On the gravestone of Thomas first, the name is spelled Solley. This is the way his descendants in this country have continued to spell it. But strangely enough, on the stone of Melinda Landers, at George's Hill, where it stands beside that of Thomas Solley, her name is spelled Solly. On Eunice's stone, at Bridgeport, the name is spelled Solly. On the Weston town records, the name of our first ancestor in this country is spelled Solley, while Eunice's name is spelled Duffee.

Whenever I have seen the name in print, twice in the newspapers, and once in *Vick's Floral Magazine*, the name has been spelled Solly. Dr. Solly, an English physician of note, who lived for some years at Colorado Springs, Colorado, spelled the name Solly. When I saw the name in London, it was spelled Solly. A street by this name at Sheffield, England, is also spelled in this way. The name on the coat of arms, and also in the book of Heraldry, is spelled Solly. That prominent English Unitarian minister and Biblical writer, Rev. Henry Solly, in the two volumes of his autobiography entitled, "These Eighty Years," in which he claims the Solly coat of arms as belonging to their branch of the family, spells the name Solly. I have been told that the name is spelled Solley by Yorkshire families in England. But the families in Kent spell it like the name on the coat of arms, Solly. I am inclined to think that both names are the same. But whichever way is right, families holding this name, either in England or in this country, are not numerous.

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In the marriage record of Mercy Ann Solley, her name is recorded as Sawley. One of my mother's uncles, Amos Treat, used always to say that this was the proper spelling of the name. I have found Thomas first's name indexed once in the Revolutionary War records as Saulley. It is also spelled both Solly and Solley, interchangeably, many times. This only proves to us that which is found for every other name in records and writings over a century ago. Spelling had not then become an art. People spelled a word as it sounded right to them individually. Besides, they frequently took great liberties in spelling, as all ancient documents show, and there was no little carelessness. Probably the spelling of the name Solly on the coat of arms is the correct one.

There is a name spelled Soley, which is often thought to be our family name, as the pronunciation of it is similar. An old colonial family of this name settled in Charlestown, Massachusetts, before 1650. There is in the ancient Phipps Street burying ground in that city, where Rev. John Harvard is buried, an old family tomb with the name Soley carved deep upon its door. There is also a street in Charlestown, extending from Main Street up Bunker Hill to the monument, named Soley, for this family.

In "Genealogy and Estates of Charlestown," by Wyman, Soley's lane and Soley's wharf are referred to.

In the records of the First Church in Charlestown we find the name Abigail, wife of Mr. John Soley, 1691, besides many other Soley names. Of this family we have records as follows:

1. Matthew Soley, sea captain.
2. John.
3. John.
4. John.
5. John.
6. John.
7. Nathaniel.

It appears that this family of Soley figured prominently at Charlestown, Massachusetts, during the latter half of the seventeenth century. There is quite a complete outline of it in the "Genealogy and Estates of Charlestown," by Wyman, under the name Soley.

Of the eighty references in the New England Genealogical

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Register, under the names Soley, Solley, Soly, two-thirds of them refer to this family. The earliest record of the Soley family at Charlestown is of one Rebecca, daughter of Manus Solly, born August 8, 1646. Under lists of soldiers in King Philip's War is one Rowland Soley—August 9, 1675.

From Judge Sewell's memo. New His. Reg. Vol. 8, page 18, he mentions Matthew Solley (note spelling), shipmaster, London, England. This Matthew is put down as the founder of the Soley family in Charlestown. So the name was spelled three ways, Soley, Solley, and Solly, all for the same family.

The Widow Soley is listed among those taxed at Charlestown, August 21, 1688. This is the widow of Captain Matthew. There is also a record of Mrs. Sarah Soley, widow of Captain Matthew Soley, who died at New London, Connecticut, aged 93, where her tombstone can now be seen. See Wyman's "Genealogy and Estates of Charlestown."

In the days when the town officials "seated the meeting house," there is a record of John Soley being assigned to pew 5, at the First Church. That gave the Soley family very high rank at Charlestown. There is no written history of this family as far as I know, but it dates back to Captain Matthew Soley, or Solley, of London, England.

But we find one New England colonial family with the same spelling as our own. In that celebrated work, "The Wentworth Genealogy, English and American," by John Wentworth, LL. D., Chicago, Vol. I., page 287, we find that a London English family by the name of Solley came to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where they became intimately connected with the Wentworths and married into that family.

"Nathaniel Solley, formerly of London, England, was of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, as early as 10, November, 1702. —Sam'l Solley notifies 9, December, 1757, those who have claims against him to present them as he is about to leave for England." He left soon after as the New Hampshire Gazette, published at Portsmouth 20, March, 1761, announces the death in London of Lucy, wife of Hon. Sam'l Solley.

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His former wife, Elizabeth, daughter of George and Sarah Jaffrey, died at Portsmouth, 13, March, 1761, aged 34. The first wife's connection with Gov. John Wentworth was in being a daughter of George Jaffrey, who married for his wife the governor's sister, Sarah. George Jaffrey, president of the council, and Sam'l Solley, counsellor, were also members of a committee of six who conferred with the governor over mooted matters of state.

In the New England and Genealogical Register we find quite a number of references to the Portsmouth Solleys: Vol. 15, page 16—Elizabeth Jaffrey, b. July 20, 1719, m. Samuel Solley, October 20, 1741, he died in England, June, 1785. Elizabeth Solley d. March 13, 1753, at Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Vol. 13, page 303—Lucy Lechmere, m. Samuel Solley, of Portsmouth, February 5, 1756. (The name is spelled both with and without the "e" in these records.)

Elizabeth Solley had two sons, Isaac and Samuel. George Jaffrey, Portsmouth, in letter March 13, 1753, to David Jeffries, Esq., asks him to have prepared for the funeral of his sister, Mrs. Samuel Solley, eight Scutcheons, to be of the Solly and Jaffrey arms impaled. The seal is that of Solly. (Note name is here spelled Solly.) The crest is a sole fish aneant.

Vol. 4, page 335—Sam'l Solley marries George Jaffrey's daughter; was counsellor. The name Samuel Solley is kept up in the family of Wm. Wentworth, brother to Governor Benning. Samuel was counsellor from 1740-1753.

In "Rambles about Portsmouth," Second Series, 1869, by Charles W. Brewster, there is an account of a massive silver waiter belonging to Theodore Atkinson. On this waiter is inscribed the names, ages, and deaths of forty-eight individuals who were friends of the elder Atkinson. From the appearance of the names it looks as though they were engraved as the people died. Here we find this inscription:

26. Elizabeth Solley, March 12th, 1753, 34.

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Then follows an explanation :

Elizabeth Solley was born July 20, 1719, was daughter of George Jaffrey, who married Sarah Jeffries of Boston, January 10, 1710. She married October 20, 1741, Hon. Samuel Solley, who was made councilor in 1740. Solley went to England in 1758, where his second wife, Lucy Lechmere, died in 1761. He died in London, June, 1785. There was in Portsmouth in 1702, Nathaniel Solley, who called himself "formerly of London," probably father of Samuel. The above Elizabeth Solley was sister to Ann Jaffrey, who married Nathaniel Pierce. She died childless.

[She is reported in other records to have two children.—G. W. S.]

Col. Atkinson, who lived at No. 41 Court Street, Portsmouth, was a man of much wealth, and his house contained more silverware than any other in New Hampshire. It reposed in an iron-grated chest, where it could be displayed beyond the reach of thieves.

Elizabeth Solley was probably buried in an old family tomb in St. John's churchyard, Portsmouth, along with the Wentworths and Jaffreys. In the book, "Abstracts from some two thousand of the oldest tombstones in Portsmouth and New Castle, New Hampshire," by Arthur H. Locke, the name Solley is not mentioned. These Solleys were very aristocratic and intense royalists, and appear to have returned to England. Elizabeth had two sons, Isaac and Samuel, but as there is no later record of them in New Hampshire annals, they must have returned to England with their father. America was not a comfortable country at that time for royalists.

In the New England Register, Vol. 31, page 65, we find record of Sam'l Solly, Counsellor of New Hampshire—Sandwich, England—Mch. 17, 1752, London, April 18, 1751, Letters to David Jeffries, Esq.

From English records the following references are interesting,—New England Register, Vol. 37, page 383, refers to Richard Soley, Sturbridge, Worcester County. Also to Dudley, same county.

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

So far the records point to the origin of the Solley family in England to Kent, London, and Worcester County.

From the will of John Hollis, St. Mary Matfellow, White Chapel, Middlesex, proved January 13, 1735, there is an item "to the five sons of daughter Ann Solly."

In the will of Thomas Hollis of St. Mary's White Chapel, Middlesex, proved January 26, 1730, there are bequests to his nephews, Richard and John Solly of Faversham. This is the famous Hollis family which bequeathed money to Harvard College and for which one of the old buildings in the college yard is named.

It is interesting in this connection to note from references in the New England Genealogical Register the following items about the English family of Solly. In the will of Timothy St. Nicholas of Ashe, Kent, England, proved September 17, 1606, he mentions one "Mr. Benj. Solley, my old school fellow and Christian friend." Here the name is spelled the same as that of the Portsmouth Solleys, and as we spell it.

The family of Rev. Henry Solly dates from this same parish of Ashe, so I take the liberty of quoting from his autobiography, "These Eighty Years," his account of the name Solly, and of his branch of the family. Evidently the Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Solleys are connected with them.

According to custom, it seems proper to begin by mentioning one's ancestors. Mine were Kentish yeomen, farming their own land during some four or five hundred years, in the parish of Ashe, next Sandwich, a history of which and its inhabitants may be seen in a work entitled "A Corner of Kent," by J. R. Planché (Hardwicke). Some portion of the old estate still remains in the hands of one or two of their descendants, but none of them are now resident in that locality. According to the history in question, those old Kentish yeomen appear to have mingled, to some extent, with the County families of the district, though to what degree either party benefited thereby, the said history does not mention. A worthy Baronet figures in the genealogical tree—a Sir Henry Furness—and what is more interesting at the present time is the circumstance of the first Lord Shaftesbury having been god-father to another ancestor,

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a Mrs. John Solly, née Legay. In an old chronicle, also, there are curious traces of a more interesting and remote ancestry among the chivalry of the 12th and 13th centuries. For there we find a certain Hugh Alston (a forbear of the highhearted and excellent Governor of Usk Gaol, the late Captain Alston, R. N.), mentioned as having fought under a redoubtable Sir Geoffrey de Solly in the Crusades, who, we may hope, acquitted himself gallantly therein, for the sake of his innumerable descendants, who have since swarmed abundantly in the Isle of Thanet; though, until the middle of the last century, no member of that illustrious family (doubtless in consequence of their extreme humility and contentment), appears to have ventured to establish himself anywhere else in the United Kingdom. The crest of the particular branch of these Solllys with which I have to claim relationship, (a sole fish surmounting a crescent), appears to confirm this supposed connection with the crusading knight, as it expresses in heraldic language the victory of Christianity over Moslemism—the first having been the accepted symbol of Christianity, and the crescent, of course, of Islam.

In the early part of the last century, however, a certain Isaac Solly appears to have been inspired with a more adventurous or restless spirit than distinguished most of his clan, and to have migrated to London, where he laid the foundation of the large mercantile business in the Baltic lumber trade, afterwards developed by his son, and greatly enlarged by his grandson, my father. On leaving the peaceful seclusion of the village of Ash, these Solllys became zealous Protestant Dissenters or English Presbyterians. My grandfather, who settled in Walthamstow, Essex, joined with a number of the neighboring gentry (Protestant Dissent being greatly honoured, then, among the prosperous middle class), in building a modest, barnlike place of worship in Marsh Street (now High Street), Walthamstow, about the year 1730, and known as the "Old Meeting" after a new one (lower down the street) was built by a number of orthodox seceders from the original society.

My father's mother was a grand-daughter of Daniel Neal, the eminent author of "The History of the Puritans." I can just recollect old Mrs. Solly as a stately and rather severe old lady, attired in a magnificent yellow silk brocade, as she appeared at Leyton House on the Christmas day when I was five years old, and was led up to her to receive the golden guinea which she gave all her numerous grandchildren every Christmas day till her death. Unfortunately for me, being the youngest of my father's family, she died before another Christmas day came around. The good lady had, however, given away a considerable number of guineas by that time, for she had five sons and seven daughters; all but one married, and most of them having several children. One of my uncles, Samuel Solly, F. R. S., obtained some distinction as a geologist,

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

and in conjunction with Count Rumford and other gentlemen, took part in founding the Royal Institution in Albermarle Street.

Another of my father's brothers, Edward Solly, was an eminent connoisseur in the works of the old Masters, and founded the national Gallery at Berlin. He had a very fine collection of pictures himself, at one time, three of which (all that remained of the collection) were bequeathed by one of his daughters, at her death, to our own National Gallery. Another uncle, Richard, who married a sister of Sir Frederic Flood, was chiefly memorable on account of his widow, after his early death, erecting a splendid monument to his memory in Worcester Cathedral. As, however, the lady showed how happy she had been in her first marriage by marrying a second time, tradition long credited an ancient verger of the Cathedral with winding up his eulogium on the monument and its most pathetic and affectionate inscription, by a sarcastic reference to the inconstancy of woman's love, manifestly making, thereby, an unjust use of his ecclesiastical position and extended influence!

I find in the family of the Rev. Henry Solly the same Christian names as we have in our own; Thomas, John, Henry, George, Polly, Ann, and Elizabeth being the most prominent. Dr. Solly gives the first Christian name of a Solley in his book as John. The member of the old First church at Charlestown, Massachusetts, is recorded as the widow of John Soley. The son of Thomas first, of Weston, Connecticut, who went away to sea, was named Henry, the same as the English writer of the autobiography. The name of the Berlin professor is the same as that of our first ancestor in America—Thomas. The first born recorded child of Thomas and Eunice Solley of Weston, Connecticut, was named John. Was this the name of Thomas's father in old England? It was the custom in those days to name the first born son after either parent or grandparent. Do these families spring from the same root?

During the summer of 1909, I wrote to Rev. Henry Shaen Solly, of Southcote, Dorset, England, trying to find some connecting link between our families, and received the following answer:



Edward Solly.
F.R.S. F.L.S.

AN ENGLISH SOLLY COAT OF ARMS.

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Southcote, Alexandra Road, Parkstone, Dorset, Aug. 4, '09.

DEAR SIR: I have received your letter of July 13. Before answering I consulted two cousins of mine who are living in the neighborhood, but I am sorry to say the information they can give does not extend beyond what I already possess.

I return your paper of questions with such answers as I can give.

Our family home is the parish of Ash, near Sandwich, Kent, and in that neighborhood, Sollys have been plentiful and are still to be found, the name being sometimes spelled Solley, but not, so far as I know, Soley. The earliest of the line we can trace is Squire Solly, d. 1490. They were Kentish yeomen. In the eighteenth century some of them came to London and all the cousins I can trace are descended from John Solly, who died 1748. Your connection, if it exists, must be higher up. I think your only chance of pursuing it would be to employ a professional agent. I know of no book that would help you. Our crest is on this paper and we have a somewhat elaborate coat of arms, but that would be of no assistance, as it was probably assumed subsequent to his coming to London.

Even if we cannot prove cousin-hood, I am glad to hear from a brother minister and shall hope to hear of any further steps you may take.

Yours faithfully,

H. SHAEN SOLLY.

In the New England Historical and Genealogical Register the family name is indexed as follows, under the spelling Soley; Solley, Solly, Soly.

Solley Family Coat of Arms and Crest.

In the book of Family Crests, Volume II., published by Bell and Daldy, 186 Fleet Street, London, England, 1859, Edition 9, we find the following names having crests:

Solley and Solly. A swan naiant, in a lake, wings indorsed.

Soley. A crescent with points upward and a fish above.

Solay and Soley. A dolphin embowed.

Sole. Out of a mural coronet, or a demi-lion, s. a., langued and armed of the first.

The crest which is used by Rev. Henry Shaen Solly is the same as the one given by Bell and Daldy, the crescent and fish, under the name Soley, which has the following motto, "*Deo Soli Gloria.*" [Glory to God Alone.]

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The coat of arms of this family is an elaborate one.

Dr. John B. Solley, Jr., while in London some years ago, found an elaborate coat of arms with this same crest—the crescent and fish—with the Latin motto, "*Aut manum, aut frigidum ferrum.*" It was used as the book plate of one Edward Solly, F. R. S., F. S. A. This has attracted our attention from its curious motto, which translated reads "Either hand or cold steel." It is very typical of the Solley nature and attitude.

We thus see the crest, crescent and fish, used twice by families spelling their name Solly, although Bell and Daldy give that crest to the name spelled Soley.

While we have not established the right to claim any of these coats of arms or crests, still they are interesting as coming from families of the same name in old England, and may be of use for future reference.

Dr. John B. Solley, Jr., secured from the Herald's College at London, England, in 1910, most interesting and valuable copies of Solley arms and genealogy, which trace the family back to 1419. A study of the engraved charts will prove interesting.

The following English works give some mention of the Solley family both in Kent and Worcester: Jewett's Reliquary, XVIII., 207, Metcalf's Visitation of Worcester, 1883-'87, Planche's Corner of Kent, 401.

The Name Duffee.

Edward Morgan made an exhaustive study of all the books in the Bridgeport public library which related to the towns in which the Solleys and Duffees had lived, going through the histories of Fairfield, Stratford, Bethel, Danbury, and Woodbury, which also includes Southbury, Connecticut, but he found nothing of importance on the Duffee, Dorfee, Durfee family.



Thomas Solley
13 Hen 11th 1419

Will^m Solley

Thomas Solley senne & h^{is}
1463

Thomas Solley Lord
of Hindlip eldest son
& h^{is}

Richard Solley a
younger son

Solley Lord
of Hindlip

John Solley of Shrofford
near London second son

Thomas Solley 2^d son & h^{is}
Thomas Solley of Monmouth

Thomas Solley Esq Lord of Hindlip
who died in August 15th last year of
2 Mary 1553 = Elizabeth
da^{ughter} of Thos^{mas}
of Hedingham

John Solley
senne & h^{is}

Richard Solley of Shroff
2^d son

Arthur Solley senne & h^{is}
second son

Humfrey Solley of Shroff
2^d son

John Solley of Shroff new living
1570

Humfrey Solley

All these are collected out of my
own papers

The Hedingham
Humfrey Solley

I hereby certify the above
written document to be
faithfully extracted from
the Records of the Herald's
College, London

23rd March 1910

Charles Lee
John Knolly



John Solley of *Writen* parochia de
Tharnton in com Thigorn et circa annu
1646

1 Humphry Solley of *Snite*
eldest son died unmarried
circa Annu 1647

2 John Solley
2^d son died
unmarried

3 Elizabeth wife of *Wicham*
Belton of *Thigorn* in com
Thigorn

Mary dau of
William Thors of
Tharnton in com
Thigorn
1st wife

Thomas Solley now
living at *Snite* in
com Thigorn at 168
Ann 1683

Mary dau of *Thos*
Thorley of *Writen* co
Thigorn widow of ...
1st wife of *Snite* in com
Thigorn
2^d wife SP

William Solley of *Writen* in com Thigorn
now living at circa 63th 1683
He mar^d his first wife ... da^r of ...
Walter of *Writen* and now at *Writen*.

Martha dau of
Richard Nelson of
Writen in com Thigorn
now living at circa 63th 1683
SP

1 Thomas Solley now
living at *Snite* in
com Thigorn at circa
1683

2 Humphry Solley of
Writen in com Thigorn
at circa 33 Ann 1683

3 Sarah dau of
Writen in com Thigorn
at circa 33 Ann 1683

Mary first mar^d to *Thos* Barter of
Writen in com Thigorn at circa 63th 1683
He mar^d his first wife ... da^r of ...
Walter of *Writen* and now at *Writen*.

4 Elizabeth wife of *Wicham*
Belton of *Thigorn* in com
Thigorn

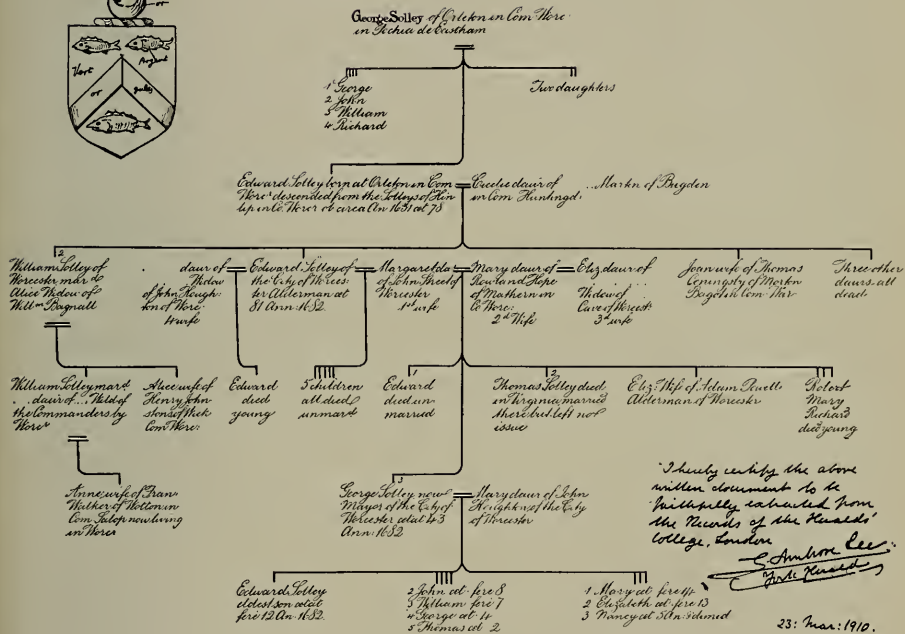
Certified by Humphry Solley

I hereby certify the above
written document to be
truthfully extracted from
the Records of the *Writen*
College, London.

23. Jan. 1910

C. Ambrose Lee,
Arch. Recd. Sec.

Mr. Tolley produced a Pedigree with these Arms painted on them but there must be better proof made before they are allowed. Vide C 30 100



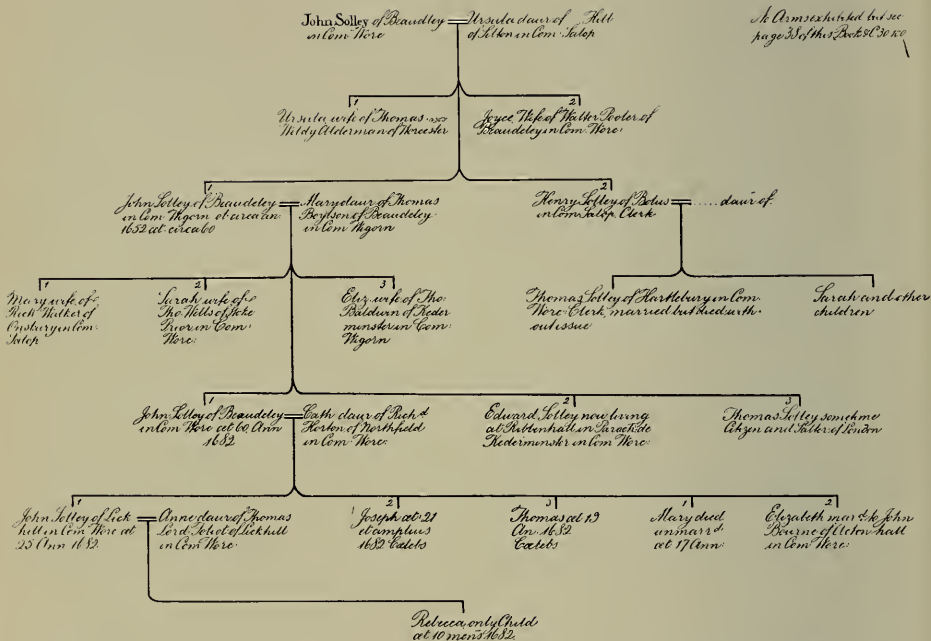
Certified by Geo. Selley

23: Mar: 1910.

Brantley Family
Bathing the Hands

Brantley
21 Aug 1632

It is presumed that the
page 25 of this Book is 26



I hereby certify the above
written document to be
correctly extracted from
the records of the records
college, London
23, Mar 1910
Amherst Lee
John Lee

HIS DESCENDANTS

From the records of "Connecticut Men in the War of the Revolution," he copied the following:

Page 173—Thomas *Durfy, enlisted for war term on June 11, 1777, under Capt. Edward Fells of Middletown, Ct.

Page 346—Thomas Durfee, private, paid from January 1, 1781, to December 6, 1781. Capt. Asahel Hodge, Harwinton, Connecticut.

Page 83—Thomas Duffey, enlisted July 10, and discharged December 10, 1775, 9th Company, Peter Peritt, Captain, Milford, Connecticut. All officers from Milford, Connecticut.

Page 233—Thomas Duffy, enlisted April 18, 1777, for war term. Company—Smith. Deserted July 10, 1779, rejoined. Discharged December 6, 1781. 8th regiment, Col. Jno. Chandler, Newtown, Connecticut. Maj. David Smith, Waterbury, Connecticut. A number of Stratford, Connecticut, names among the officers.

Edward Morgan corresponded with the town clerk of Weston, Connecticut, whose wife, Mrs. Arthur C. Bradley, made an exhaustive study of the original town records, a priceless possession which the town of Weston has preserved in most excellent condition. The following extracts in her letters from these records are interesting:

(1) Vol. 2, page 387—Thomas Clark and wife, Deborah of New Milford, Litchfield County. Wm. Hamilton and wife Martha, Moses Godfrey and wife, Esther, all of Weston. For three pounds, lawful money, full satisfaction of Eliza Duffee, wife of Thomas Duffee, quitclaimed unto her the said Elizabeth Duffee, etc., in quantity 12 acres, bounded S cross, highway W. Tim Hubbell's land N., on John and Ruth Wheeler land, E. Silliman long lots with dwelling house and all other buildings standing June 15, 1792.

(2) Vol. 3, page 333—I, Hannah Gilbert, etc., for considerations of 98 pounds, lawful money, receive to my satisfaction of Thomas Duffee of Weston, on behalf of his wife, Elizabeth Duffee, etc., situated in Weston, in North Fairfield Parish in Seeley, long lots so called in quantity, 18 acres, 2 quarters and 27 rods North & E. on highway Southerly it runs to a point and W. on Morehouse long lots.

*NOTE—We see the name spelled here in four ways: Durfy, Durfee, Duffey, and Duffy. Probably the Thomas Duffy, on page 233 in records of "Connecticut Men in War of Revolution," refers to Thomas, father of Eunice, whom Thomas Solley married at Stratford. G. W. S.

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

November 12, 1795.

(3) No. 4, page 219—I, Wm. Bennett, for 11 pounds of Daniel Durphy, 2 acres. Index has it Daniel Durfee.

(4) Book 5, page 336—I, Ezra Wheeler, for 24 dollars, received from Elizabeth Duffee, wife of Thomas, quit claim to Elizabeth, 2 acres, bounded N. by Benj. Treadwell, E. by Wm. Bennett, S. John Hall, W. on land of John Turney, 26th of December, 1797.

(5) Book 5, page 354—I, Daniel Gray, quit claim unto Thomas and Elizabeth Duffee, 9 acres, bounded N. by said Duffee, mortgaged to Stephen Wheeler, E. on highway, S. to a point, and W. Thomas Hubbell.

(6) Vol. 6, page 380—Stephen Wheeler, for \$10, of Thomas and bounded north and east by highway, south on land formerly belonging to Thomas and Elizabeth by them sold to Andrew Lyon, west, Tim Hubbell.

(7) Vol. 7, page 394—I, Ebenezer Seeley, for one hundred, receive to full satisfaction of Elizabeth Duffee, wife of Thomas, quit claim to said Elizabeth, etc., being 12 acres the same where the said Duffee now lives, etc. May 5, 1800.

(8) Vol. 8, page 314—We, Thomas Duffee and Elizabeth Duffee, husband and wife, for \$420, of Andrew Lyon, 10½ acres, north and east on highway, south on land of said Lyon, and west on land of Tim Hubbell, signed Thomas Duffee and Elizabeth X. March 31, 1806.

(9) Vol. 8, page 316—Thomas and Elizabeth Duffee, for \$480, received from John Wheeler, Jr., 12 acres with buildings south on highway, west by Tim Hubbell, north, Stephen Jennings, and east, David Silliman, in part and part Andrew Lyon. March 31, 1806.

(10) Vol. 8, page 367—Thomas and Elizabeth Duffee, received \$20 of Jabez Treadwell, of New Fairfield, 2 acres, west John Turney, north, Jabez Treadwell, and south, John Hall. October 25, 1806.

(11) Vol. 19, page 284—Cornelius Duffee.

I, Charity Burr, of the city, county, and state of New York, of the town and county of Fairfield in state of Connecticut, for twelve hundred and fifty dollars, receive of Cornelius Duffee, of Weston, 27 acres, bounded north on highway, east and west, Samuel Coley, south, Albert Lockwood, with buildings thereon. December 3, 1831.

(12) Vol. 19, page 285—I, Cornelius Duffee, of twelve hundred and seventy five dollars, received of Wm. H. Jessup, of Fairfield, 27 acres, in Weston, north highway, east and west, Samuel Coley, south, Albert Lockwood, with buldings, etc. January 9, 1832.

Cornelius Duffee, X mark.

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In these deeds are some most interesting items. In deeds Nos. 1 and 2, Thomas and Elizabeth Duffee buy two farms at Weston (old North Fairfield parish) in the years 1792-95. That was not far from the time, 1797, that Thomas and Eunice Solley were recorded on the new Weston town records as founders of the town. As Thomas and Elizabeth Duffee bought two farms, one large and the other small, both families may have moved there about that time.

In deeds 5, 6, 7, Thomas and Elizabeth Duffee are buying more property at Weston. They secured altogether there, in six lots, sixty-three acres.

In deeds 1, 2, 4, and 7, the property was placed in Elizabeth's name.

In deeds 8, 9, 10, Thomas and Elizabeth are selling land—twenty-four acres in all. There is no record of anything concerning them after deed No. 10, October 25, 1806.

The family name is first spelled Duffee on the Weston town records. That is probably the correct spelling.

Who Daniel Duffee and Cornelius Duffee are, we have not yet found out. Possibly they were sons of Thomas and Elizabeth, anyway connections of Thomas Duffee.

In these records we find the name spelled Duffee eleven times. Once it is spelled Durphy, although indexed Durfee. Regarding the name Duffee and the correctness of the records I append the following letter from Mrs. Bradley.

Weston, Ct., June 15, 1909.

MR. EDWARD J. MORGAN,

DEAR SIR: I find Duffee spelled this way more than any other way. The deed number 11 and 12, on the back of Cornelius Duffee, I send, as that was all the names Duffee in the 28 volumes. If you should wish to ask more about these deeds, please mention volume and page. I did not find Thomas and Elizabeth Duffee name after they sold No. 8, 9, 10, papers; think they left Weston.

There is no family record of the Duffees in the records. One record book has records of some families, you see I found the name Solley there. I have written over Polly's record, that mysterious word, I cannot make any sense to it, it looks as if it was a middle name, but I

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find all other middle names recorded with capital letters; it is not faded, such as it is, hope you can solve it.

I think the early probate records of Weston, you will find at Fairfield. I find no records of Morgan in that book. We have 28 volumes in the town safe, you see No. 3, Durphey, that sounds like an Irish name, think the recorder, or the one that drew the deed, made a mistake, in the 17 hundreds they did not spell names as they do now. My name was Crosmon, now Crossman, and I see now Oyster Banks is O'Banks, and Banks, the next generation will not look for Oyster-banks. Some of the old records are good, and some do not in marriage, tell the maiden name of the wife—gives her name, as for example, Eli Thorp, married Polly Thorp, should read Polly Morehouse. This is in my own records, so presume there may be many such mistakes.

I am cleaning house, so did not have time to copy those deeds, but give you the acres, sum, and names, etc.

Yours very truly,

Route No. 12, Westport, Conn.

MRS. ARTHUR C. BRADLEY.

About this time I secured the services of two young men, Merrill G. Hastings and Howard T. Foulkes, students at Yale University, to hunt through the genealogical works in the library there for information concerning the name Duffee, Dorfee; Durfee. As there is at the university a hall and also a fund under the name Durfee, I thought possibly something might come of it. They made an exhaustive search, but the only thing which I obtained was the following note taken from the Durfee genealogy which was sent me by Foulkes:

Name Durfee unique. Very ancient in its origin, it has today its only representatives in America. Previous to 1628, it was unknown in England and ceased to be recorded in 1723. A careful search of all English records reveals only Thomas D'Urfey, or Durfee, the English dramatist, b. 1653, d. 1723. Sometime before 1628, a French refugee named d'Urfé fled from Rouchelle, France, bringing a son. Thomas D'Urfey was born of this marriage in 1653, and settled at Exeter, England. Thomas Durfee, ancestor of American Durfee family, born 1643, and came to America in 1660, probably from Exeter, England. Page 19.

Eunis, born on January 15, 1789, at Norwich, Connecticut, of John Durfee and Mary Peck, and married Z. T. Bradley, on October 28, 1810.

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It is singular, in this connection, that the given name should be Thomas, and that there should have been a Eunice, daughter of Thomas Duffee. It may be the same family.

We have now found Eunice's family name spelled in seven different ways—Duffee, Duffey, Duffy, Durfy, Durphy, Durfee, and Dorfee. We find it the largest number of times spelled Duffee. As we find it spelled two different ways in one single entry of a few lines, Durfee, Durphey, we judge that it was spelled phonetically, according to the local sound which each one gave when he pronounced it.

As New Englanders are inclined to clip their words, and give them a flat nasal pronunciation, we can easily see how that the French name D'Urfey would become flattened out to Durfee, or Duffee, or just plain Duffy. We can also easily see how, if it is a Scotch or English name, Durfee or Dorfee, that it would be flattened out to Duffee or Duffy.

I do not think it is an Irish name, for there was little or no Irish immigration to this country during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Neither do the characteristics of the family which we have been able to trace point to those of the Irish race. If the name was just plain Duffy, none in those plain and severe days would have thought of tinkering with it and spelling Duffy, Duffee or Dorfee.

For myself, until exact knowledge is ascertained, I am content to hold that the source of the name is either of Scotch or French origin, and that none of these spellings may be the original one. No more liberty has been taken with the spelling of the name Duffee than with that of any other New England name, for we find such well-known and prominent names as Treat spelled Tret, Trot, Trott, and Treate.

As the name is spelled Duffee in a majority of the records, especially those at Weston, I hold this to be the correct spelling of the name, as far as we know at present, and have so used it throughout my writing. In the index of "Record of Connecticut Men in the War of the Revolution," I find eleven men listed under the spelling Duffee.

THOMAS SOLLEY

Under the spelling Durfee, I find six: Asa, Benjamin, Daniel, Ephraim, Luke, and Thomas.

Under Durfery, one: Joseph.

Under Durffee, one: John.

Under Durfy, three: Ebenezer, Jedediah, and David.

The strangest thing of all about the family and its name is, that although they were property owners and lived in well-known old towns of Connecticut, there seems to be no trace whatever of the family left after the deed given by Cornelius Duffee in 1832. Whether the family emigrated to some other part of the country, or all of the children were females, and married into other families, or whether they died out in a natural way, we have no clew as yet, to bring us knowledge. We have found no gravestones bearing the name of Duffee, and no records other than those given from Weston, Connecticut. Polly Duffee Fanton simply tells us that her mother died 1834. (See pension papers.)

CHAPTER VII.

FINDING THE MILITARY RECORD AND PENSION PAPERS.

THIS chapter is due entirely to the untiring efforts of Edward J. Morgan, who, without sparing time or expense, found these records at Washington, D. C., and secured the following copies from the Revolutionary War archives there. As far as I know, it is the first time a complete copy of the records relating to Thomas Solley has been made, and they are today the only copies in existence. Mr. Morgan was informed that some of the records were so faded that it was only with the use of restoratives and the magnifying glass that they could be read at all.

The records are unusually large, complete, and full of surprises, and they contain a vast amount of material relating to Thomas and Eunice not heretofore known. Here we will find a description of Thomas, a schedule of their property and household effects, an account of their marriage, statements of neighbors and friends, the controversy over granting the pension to the widow, together with proofs furnished of their marriage, and also a very sad account of their sickness and poverty.

The information contained in these records is priceless, and constitutes the most valuable information which we have secured thus far in our "Hunt for an Ancestor."

Copy of letter from Record Division, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions, Washington, D. C., September 24, 1908:

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

EDWARD J. MORGAN,

DEAR SIR: In reply to your request for a statement of the military history of Thomas Solley, a soldier of the Revolutionary War, you will find below the desired information as contained in his and his widow's applications for pension on file.

Date of enlistment and length of service was from January, 1781, to August, 1783. He was a private in 2nd Continental Dragoons. The rank of officer under whom service was rendered was Capt. Stanton and Col. Elisha Sheldon.

Thomas Solley engaged in no battles. He enlisted at Fairfield, Ct., residence Fairfield, Ct. Applied for pension Mar. 31, 1818, and claim was allowed. Residence at date of application, Weston, Ct. Age at date of application, 60 years. He died at Southbury, Ct., June 4, 1829. He married at Stratford, Dec. 13, 1781, Eunice, daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Dorfee. She was born at Stratford, Dec. 25, 1766, and was allowed a pension on application executed Oct. 4, 1836, while a resident of Bridgeport, Ct. In 1820, the soldier refers to three daughters, Eunice, age 12, Mercy, age 10, and Julia, age 8 years.

Respectfully,

J. L. DAVENPORT,

Acting Comr.

Note the spelling of Eunice's name—Dorfee.

From "Record of Connecticut Men in the War of the Revolution," we find items of interest to the Solley genealogy:

Page 754 of index mentions Eunice Saulley, pensioner, 6th census 1840, as then living in Bridgeport, and 74 years of age. As Eunice was widow of Thomas Solley, and born 1766, this confirms other records, except the misspelling of the name.

Page 283—Thos. Lolley (this should be Solley as no doubt the capital S was taken for an L, and other records confirm this), private, enlisted Jan. 11, 1781, served three years, or it may mean he enlisted for a term of three years. Farmer, 5ft. 6", dark eyes, dark complexion, light hair. He enlisted from Fairfield, and the day previous we noticed that Jed. Sherwood enlisted, also from Fairfield.

NOTE—Here is a description of Thomas first.

Here also in government records we find two mistakes in spelling the Solley—which is given as "Saulley" and "Lolley." The capital S is often written like L.

HIS DESCENDANTS

On page 271 we find recorded as follows :

Col. Sheldon's Light Dragoon's 1777-'83. Of the four regiments of light dragoons raised for the Continental Army in 1777, the Second commanded by Col. Elisha Sheldon was raised in and credited to Connecticut, although some of the officers and men belonged to other states. Its field of service during the war was generally the east side of the Hudson along the Westchester front. Occasionally its companies served at different points. In the spring of 1777, Maj. Talmadge joined Washington in N. J. with two troops and fought at Germantown, Oct. 4. At the same time Capt. Seymour, with his troop, was serving under Gates against Burgoyne. The other Troops were under Putnam's command at Peekskill. In the summer of 1778 the regiment was on the Hudson and in the fall formed part of Gen. Chas. Scott's Light Corps on the lines in Westchester. The main body with infantry supports guarded the same ground to the close of the war. It wintered generally in Connecticut in 1780-'81, however it was sent to Western Mass., where hay and forage were plenty. Maj. Talmadge was frequently detached on special service by Washington, and distinguished himself in expeditions. Regiment disbanded June, 1783.

The following roster of the command appears among the Revolutionary War records in the Pension Bureau, Washington, and is of special interest as the heading indicates :

FIELD & STAFF

Col. Elisha Sheldon Salisbury Ct., Lt Col Saml Blagden, Salisbury Ct., resigned

John Jameson of Fairfax Va., succeeded Blagden.

Maj. Benj Talmadge Wethersfield, Ct., Adjutant. Jerinimus Hoogland N. Y. Surgeons. John Homans Dorchester, Mass., and Jabez Canfield Morristown N. J. Surgeons mates, Jos. Loring, Morristown N. J. David Mumford New London Ct., and Isaac Bronson of Waterbury Ct.

The Sufferings of Revolutionary War Soldiers.

The following account from the "Record of Service of Connecticut Men," is inserted here to give a picture of the sufferings in the Continental army about the time of Thomas Solley's arrival in America, and of his enlistment in the Colonial service. This may account for his early breakdown in health.

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

Hardly had the troops completed their huts before a winter of unusual severity set in—the most trying experienced during the Revolution. It was long known as the famous winter of 1780, when cold, hunger, and want of clothing caused the greatest suffering among the troops. The distress is described in letters from camp.

The severity of the weather hath been such that the men have suffered much without shoes and stockings, and working half leg deep in snow.

Captain Joseph Walker of the same regiment writes, February 6, 1780:

The lads bore it with the greatest patience and fortitude. . . . After our long march (from Peekskill) you may well think our men were destitute of clothing. After our arrival we began and completed our Hutts which destroyed our cloathing still more and to my certain knowledge we had not more than Fifty men in the Reg^t. return^d fit for duty,—many a good Lad with nothing to cover him from his hips to his toes save his blanket.

Thomas Solley's First Application for a Pension.

Thomas was a long time in getting a pension for his two years and seven months of service in the Continental army. Whether this was due to lack of action by Congress, or whether it was due to his own distaste in the matter, we cannot say. It was not until the act of Congress which was passed March 18, 1818, that he applied for one. He was then fifty-nine years of age. He was placed on the pension list of our Revolutionary War soldiers on March 31, 1818, under pension number 10,091. He lived to enjoy the benefits of this pension eleven years. Thomas Solley died June 1, 1829, aged seventy years.

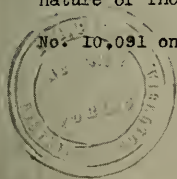
DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT, ss.

On this 31st day of March 1818 Thomas Solley of Weston in said District under oath declares before Pierpont Edwards District Judge of the United States for the District of Connecticut in which District the declarant doth now reside and for more than thirty years last past hath resided that in the month of January 1781 he enlisted in the service of the United States as a private and in the month of April or May next following joined the Army of the United States at Northampton

Thomas Solley
Thomas Solley *Thomas Solley*

District of Columbia, ss:

I certify that the foregoing is a tracing of the signature of Thomas Solley to papers filed in connection with case No. 10,091 on file in the Pension Office.



L. M. Fox,

Notary Public, D.C.

HANDWRITING OF THOMAS SOLLEY, FIRST, AGE 59,
AFTER 19 YEARS OF ILLNESS.

HIS DESCENDANTS

in Mass. in Captain Staunton's Company in Col. Elisha Sheldon's Regiment of Light Dragoons in the Conn. line and continued in the service of the United States in said Company and Regiment of the Continental establishment (having first enlisted for the term of three years) until the month of August (on this the declarant believes knowing that he continued in said service after the discharge of the troops enlisted to serve during the war) in the year 1783 when the declarant was discharged he has by time and accident lost.

And the declarant further maketh oath that he is and ever since his said discharge from the service of the United States hath been a resident citizen of the United States and that his circumstances in life are so reduced that he is in need of the assistance of his country for his support.

[Signed] THOMAS SOLLEY.

DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT, SS.

March 31st 1818 the within named Thomas Solley came before me and in my presence subscribed the aforesaid declaration and made oath that the same is true.

[Signed] PIERPONT EDWARDS,
District Judge of said District.

I Pierpont Edwards District Judge of the District of Connecticut do certify that it appears to my satisfaction that Thomas Solley who made and subscribed the declaration contained in the annexed schedule did serve in the Revolutionary War against the common Enemy as stated in his said declaration and I now transmit the proceedings and testimony taken and had before me in his case to the Secretary of the Department of War, pursuant to an Act of Congress in such case made and provided in said proceedings contained in the annexed schedule May 20th, 1818.

[Signed] PIERPONT EDWARDS.

DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT, SS.

On this 31st day of March 1818 before me Pierpont Edwards District Judge of the District of Connecticut came Heschain Bradley of Stratford in said District a respectable citizen thereof who being duly sworn doth depose and say that he knows that the aforementioned declarant Thomas Solley served in the service of the United States in said Regiment of Dragoons Lt. Col. Talmadge detachment while the same Regiment was quartered on Greenfield Hill in Fairfield in said District where the deponent then resided during two consecutive winters during the War of the Revolution, and that ever since the end of said War the said declarant has been and now is a resident citizen of the United States and that his circumstances in life are so reduced that he is in need of assistance from his country for support.

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

At the same time came Samuel Lacey of Fairfield in said District and Joseph Bennett of Weston in the District aforesaid both respectable citizens who both being sworn do depose say that the aforesaid declarant now is and ever since the end of the War of the Revolution hath been a resident citizen of the United States and that his circumstances in life are so reduced that he is in need of assistance from his country for his support and the said Lacey further saith that he knew the said declarant enlisted as a soldier in the service of the United States.

[Signed]

H. BRADLEY

JOSEPH BENNETT.

SAMUEL LACEY

[NOTE—That name Bennett keeps cropping up.]

STATE OF CONNECTICUT,

County of Fairfield, ss, County Court.

On the 13th day of June A D 1820 personally appeared in open Court being a Court of Record for said County Thomas Solly aged sixty-two years a resident of the Town of Weston in said County and after being first duly sworn according to Law doth on his oath declare that he served in the Revolutionary War as following (to wit). That he enlisted on or about the middle of January 1781 under the Continental establishment for three years in Capt. Staunton's Company it being the six troop of Light Horse under the command of Col. Sheldon of the Connecticut line and continued to serve in the same until the during War men were discharged which was in the month of June 1783 when he was dismissed until further orders and in the latter part of the Month of August or the fore part of September was discharged—and that he is now on the Pension list under the Act of Congress of the 18th of March 1818—And that his declaration on which he was so placed on said pension list bears date on the 31st day of March 1818—and that his pension certificate is number 10,091—and I the said Thomas Solly do solemnly swear that I was a resident citizen of the United States on the 18th day of March 1818 and that I have not since that time by sale or any other means disposed of my property or any part thereof with intent thereby so to diminish it as to bring myself within the provision of an Act of Congress entitled an act to provide for the persons engaged in the Land and Naval services of the United States in the Revolutionary War passed on the 18th day of March 1818. And that I have not nor has any person for me any property or securities contracts or debts due to me nor have I any income other than that what is contained in the schedule hereto annexed and by me subscribed—my occupation for twenty years past has been that of Basketmaker which employment I have not been able to presue but a part of the time in consequence of

HIS DESCENDANTS

a disabled state of health which debility is a grate . . . [not legible] has been in consequence of a severe fit of sickness in the middle of March 1799 which very much affected the whole system and miserably broke my constitution and have since that time been in a declining state of health and for years past my eyesight has in a considerable agree failed me, I have a wife named Eunice fifty three years old she has been subjected to fits for thirty years and has not been able to labor but a very small part of the time and for three years past has been confined to her bed nearly half of the time in consequence of severe fits of sickness but at present is somewhat better but not able to do any labor. I have a daughter 12 years of age named Eunice—I have another daughter named Mercy aged 10 years and one named Julia 8 years who is of a very slender constitution—and none else in my family—that I am justly indebted over thirty nine dollars.

[Signed] THOMAS SOLLEY.

A Schedule of Property.

I have a house thirty six by twenty two feet about thirteen feet posts, very much out of repair with seven acres and a half of rough rocky land lying in the Town of Weston in Fairfield County at a place called Nickshole all appraised at	\$119.00
One cow \$20 and 5 hens .83	20.83
One small barn \$4 one tenth part of a saw mill all	11.50
One table 67c nine chairs \$1.08 one chest 25c	3.00
One warming pan \$1.34 1 pottage pot .20c	1.54
One iron kettle 12c 1 tin kettle .10c one copper kettle \$3	3.22
One wash tub 24c 1 spider 34c 1 wooden pail .10c	.78
One tin pail 25c 3 earthen pots 17c 4 jugs all	.46
Three bottles 18c 1 earthen pitcher 6c 5 tinpans 83c	
one earthen platter .4c	.87
One tin cup .6c 2 irons 25c 5 cups and saucers 6c	.37
One mug 10c 1 mustache cup 6c five spoons 20c five knives and seven forks 25c one wine glass .4c	.29
One pair andirons .83c one shovel and tongs .33c	1.18
One trammel 34c one half barrel .20c one barrel .6c	
Hogshead .77c	.71
One keg .20c and soap and tub .25c	.45
Four flour bls. 24c one tin .12c 3 cider barrels 75c	1.11
One reel .34c one shovel .75c 5 lbs. of old iron .25c	1.09
One fish spear 25c 11 clam baskets \$1.83 5 plain baskets 75c	1.34
Ten cross handle baskets 60c one cheese basket 34c	
One bread basket .50c	2.58

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

One hoe 17c 1 spade 17c 1 pitchfork 6c 1 rake 12c	.52
One mowing sythe 25c one ax 34c	.59
One bridle with one ring 12c grindstone 26c old school books	.68
Horse cart with harness \$2.50 gallon bottle 17c	2.67

\$177.46

I owe over what is due me to the amount of 39.00

138.46

Subscribed and sworn to and declared in open Court as aforesaid Whereupon said Court is on satisfactory proof made in Court of the opinion that the total amount in value of the property exhibited in the said schedule is one hundred and seventy seven dollars and forty six cents, and doth order these proceedings to be entered in the records of said Court.

[Signed] DAVID BURR, *Clerk.*

I David Burr Clerk of the county Court for the County of Fairfield in the said State do hereby certify that the foregoing oath and schedule thereto annexed are truly copied from the records of the said Court, and do further certify that it is the opinion of the said Court that the total amount in value of the property exhibited in the aforesaid schedule of Thomas Solley is one hundred and seventy seven dollars and forty six cents.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the said Court of Fairfield, the 13th day of June AD1820.

[Signed] DAVID BURR,

Clerk of County Court for said Fairfield.

DISTRICT AND STATE OF CONNECTICUT)

FAIRFIELD June 15, 1820

I Robert Fairchild Chief Judge of the County Court for the County of Fairfield, in said State, do certify that David Burr, Esq., is the Clerk of said Court duly appointed and sworn, and that the said Court is a Court of Records, made so by the Statute Laws of said State; that it proceeds according to the course of the common law, has a jurisdiction unlimited in point of amount, with the power of fine and imprisonment, and keeps a record of its proceedings

[Signed] ROBERT FAIRCHILD

Chief Judge of the County Court

of the County of Fairfield.

For some reason not explained, Thomas Solley seems to have had trouble over his pension, and his name appears to

HIS DESCENDANTS

have been taken from the list of government pensioners for a short time, possibly because he owned some property. The following letter explains the matter. He was again put on the list of pensioners.

FAIRFIELD, July 31, 1820.

SIR: I have recently been informed that the name of Thomas Solley of Weston has been erased from the pension list.

Believing as I do, that Mr. Solley is entitled to a pension in consequence of his extreme indigence I have taken the liberty in his behalf to request you to re-examine his case; and with a view to aiding you to come to a correct conclusion I enclose herein the affidavit of Dr. Baldwin, who is very respectable in his profession and as a witness worthy of full [not legible]

I also find two original papers delivered to me by Mr. Solley which shows that he has repeatedly needed, and received the charitable assistance of his fellow citizens for his support.

Many of the signatures to these papers are known to me to be genuine, and I presume they are all so, and the names are among the most respectable in the towns of Weston and Fairfield.

Should you require any further proof of the indigence of Solley there can as I believe be no obstacle to his proving it, from sources entitled to [not legible] except, perhaps, his inability to pay the expenses.

Your early attention to this case and a return of the original papers herein enclosed is asked.

I am, Sir,

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

[Signed]

GIDEON TOMLINSON.

Filed away at Washington, D. C., in the Revolutionary War pension archives, the two following subscription papers were found. They were probably the original papers used to help Thomas Solley in his time of greatest distress.

May 16, 1808.

This is to certify that Mr. Thomas Solley has had a grate sickness in his family through the winter past and lost one chile—his wife still remains in a low state of helth, also he lost his mare last week, which was his grate help to support his famaly in his line of business it is thought proper by his neighbors and his acquaintances for to ask the

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

people to give a little to releave his wants, and I hope they may have a fourfold reward with the thanks of their humble servant,

[Signed] THOMAS SOLLEY.

Give the poor and lend the Lord.

	<i>Dollars.</i>	<i>Cents.</i>
Thomas Hayes	\$1.00	
Benj. Treadwell		.25
B. Taylor (X his mark)		.50
Wm. Whales (X his mark)		.25
Stephen Sherwood (X his mark)	1.00	.00
Arron Seeley (X his mark)		25
Daniel Wheeburg (X his mark)		.25
Michael Jennings (X his mark)		.25
Joseph Bennett (X his mark)		.25
Sherwood Seeley (X his mark)		.50
Sarah Sanford		.20
Elizah Seeley (X his mark)		.25
John Lacey (X his mark)		.25
Ezra Seeley		.25
Elihu Stapler (X his mark)		.25
David Goods (X his mark)		.25
Thaddus B. Wakeman		.25
Lalmen Bradley (X his mark)		.25
Walter Bradley (X his mark)		.25
Herhaish Bradley (X his mark)		.25
David Hubbell (X his mark)		.25
Moses Betts (X his mark)		.25
Wm. Sherwoodson (X his mark)		.25
John Hull (X his mark)		.25
M. Buglass (X his mark)		.25
Isaac Haines (X his mark)		.25
Eli Adams His Mark X		.25
Nathan Jackson His Mark X		.25
Peter C. Oakley His Mark X		.25
Charles Wenton His Mark X		.25
Jeromiah Osbourne His Mark X		.25
Nathan Wakeman		.25
David Durney		.25
Isaac Mosehouse		.27

WESTON, May 13, 1813.

To all those who may be charitable Disposed. This may inform that Mr. Thomas Solly has been by unforeseen unusualties reduced to

HIS DESCENDANTS

necessitous circumstances In the Course of the Last Summer He had the misfortune to lose a Cow by the Horn Distemper and the last winter his family suffered much sickness the grate expenses of which he has been unable to meet—For a Forenight past he has been and now is laboring under a very sore Hand which incapactates him from Labor—being himself under these circumstances and his family in much need of a Cow it is hoped that the liberality of a generous Public will be exerted for his relief.

We the undersigned promise to pay to Mr. Thomas Solly the several . . . [not legible] for the purchase of a Cow for the relief of himself and his family.

Nathan J. Bennet	His Mark X	\$.50
Nathan Bennet	His Mark X	.50
Walker Sherwood	His Mark X	.25
David Sherwood	His Mark X	.50
Huldah Sherwood		.60
Bennett Bradley	His Mark X	.25
Sherwood Seeley	His Mark X	.50
H. Silliman	His Mark X	.50
David Sherwoodson	His Mark X	.50
Josiah B. Hall	His Mark X	.25
Aaron Seeley	His Mark X	.25
Elizah Seeley	His Mark X	.25
Clark Gregory	His Mark X	.25
David Baldwin	His Mark X	.55
Anna Baldwin	Her Mark X	.10
Kemper Knapp	His Mark X	.20
Anderson Lyon	His Mark X	.25
Clarissa Stillman	His Mark X	.50
Cyruss Silliman	His Mark X	.25

I Gabriel Baldwin of the Town of Weston in the County of Fairfield and State of Connecticut of Lawful age do Depose and say that I have known Thomas Solly of said Weston more than twenty years and attended on him and his family many times within that term of time as a phisician and for many years past the said Solly has to my knowledge been unable to do but very little labor and his wife very weakley and unable to do but very little towards the assistance and management of a Family.

To my understanding and belief many times his family has been assisted by the Baptist Church as his said Solly's Wife is a member of the said Baptist Church in the County in which said Solly now resides.

[Signed] GABRIEL BALDWIN, *Phn.*

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

FAIREIELD COUNTY: SS July 14, 1820.

Personally came Gabriel Baldwin the signer of the above Deposition and made oath to the same is known to me to be a practising Phisician and a person of truth and varasity before me Stephen Wheeler one of the associate Judges for said Fairfield County.

STATEMENT.

For a statement of the military history of Thomas Solley a soldier of the Revolutionary War, you will find below the desired information as contained in his (and his Widow's) application for pension on file in this bureau. (Wid) (F. 17,853)

Date of Enlistment or appointment . . .	Jan. 1781
Length of service	Aug. 1783
Rank	Private
Officers under whom service was rendered .	Stanton, Elisha Sheldon.
Staff	2nd Continental Dragoons.
Residence of soldier at enlistment, . . .	Fairfield, Connecticut.
Date of application for pension	Mar. 31, 1818
Res. date of application	Weston, Conn.
Age at date of application	60 years.
Died at Southbury, Connecticut June 4th	1829.

Remarks—Solley married at Stratford, Fairfield County, Connecticut Dec. 13, 1781 Eunice daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Dorfee, who was born at Stratford, Connecticut, Dec. 25, 1766. She was allowed pension on an application executed October 4, 1836, while a resident of Bridgeport, Fairfield Co., Connecticut. In 1820 Solley refers to three daughters, Eunice 12, Mercy, age 10, and Julia, aged 8 years.

The Widow's Pension.

Eunice Solley did not receive a widow's pension for seven years after her husband's death, not until after the act of Congress which was passed July 4, 1831. She applied for a pension October 4, 1836, but had considerable trouble in getting it, because there were no records of her marriage. She fully substantiated her marriage with Thomas Solley, however, as the following papers show. The first pension was granted to her in September, 1837.

HIS DESCENDANTS

Eunice Solley's First Application for Widow's Pension, October 4, 1836.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss Bridgeport.

On this fourth day of October D 1836 Personally appeared before the Probate Court in and for the District of Stratford in Said County Eunice Solly a resident of the Town of Bridgeport in County and State aforesaid aged seventy-two years who has been first duly sworn according to law on her oath made the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by the Act of Congress passed July 4, 1831.

That she is the widow of Thomas Solly late of Southbury in the County of Newhaven, State aforesaid, Decd. who was a private soldier in the Revolutionary Army in the Militia Foot in Capt. Staunton's Company in Col. Talmage Regiment and as she believes was enlisted during the War as her husband allways told her so served in the Continental three or four years was also in the Guard service in the first part of the War. That her husband was a pensioner under the Act of 1818 and drew \$96 per year until he died that she claims now a full pension on ac of his service and has not made any effort to prove his service as she supposes his service is allready sufficiently proven to entitle her to a full pension and refers to that proof in the War Office.

She further declares that she was married to the said Thomas Solly on the 13 day of December D 1779 in the Parrish of Stratford in said County by the Rev. Robert Ross who was the ordained Minister over said Parrish at that time, that her husband the aforesaid Thomas Solly died on the 4th day of June 1829 at Southbury aforesaid (as she believes) has no Records of his death would refer also for positive proofs for that to the papers she sent to Washington to draw the ballance of his pension after his death.

That he died of the disease called the Gravel the cause of which he allways imputed to his sufferings in the War.

And that she has remained his Widow ever since that Period as will more fully appear by reference to the proof hereto annexed—is not in possession of any Documentary evidence, and she further states that she was born in said Parrish of Stratford December 25, 1764 and was married as before stated a few days before she was fifteen years old and is now in the 73 year of age which enables her to fix the time when she was married as she has before stated has no documentary evidence in her possession, to prove his service nor has she any Records of any kind at this time. Had a Record of her birth and marriage and of the birth of her children until after his death, which have all been burnt since his death.

[Signed]

EUNICE SOLLY

X her mark.

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year above written before me

[Signed] MARK MOORE.
Judge of Probate.

I hereby certify that the reason why Eunice Solly did not subscribe her name to the above declaration is that she cannot now write but made her mark.

[Signed] MARK MOORE
Judge of Probate.

John Knapp of the Town of Fairfield in the county of Fairfield and State of Connecticut a Pensioner of the United States Deposeth and saith that he is well acquainted with Eunice Solley the widow of Thomas Solley decd. who is now about to apply for a pension. Deponent states that he commenced keeping house in 1777 and that said Solley and his wife Eunice came to live in the same house with him about the time said town of Fairfield was burned and lived with him about 18 months all of which time said Thomas was in service in Major Talmage Regiment, remembers said Thomas was in service one season at Green's Farms in said Town of Fairfield and said Talmage's Regiment remembers that said Thomas was in service in said Regiment at the time Lord Cornwallis was taken, Remembers seeing him in said Regiment on the Publick Green in said Fairfield on the day of Rejoicing for the victory over Cornwallis, remembers said Thomas coming out of the service to visit his wife and returning again to the Army. Was well acquainted with said Thomas and Eunice both before and after their marriage, was not at the marriage of said Thomas and Eunice but has no doubt on his mind but they were legally married and also knows that said Eunice was his only wife and that she is now his lawful widow and never married since his death nor before to any other person; The reason that he knows the facts relative to said Thomas service is as he has before stated and was allways intimately acquainted with him before his marriage and since and with said Eunice whose name before marriage was Eunice Dorfee—and who lived in the same town with the deponent.

[Signed] JOHN KNAPP

[NOTE—This is the most interesting deposition relating to Thomas and Eunice.]

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield Bridgeport Sept. 11, 1836

Personally appears John Knapp subscribed and made oath to the truth of the foregoing Deposition who I certify is well known to me and is a credible witness.

Sworn and subscribed before me

[Signed] ISAAC SHERMAN
Justice of the Peace.

HIS DESCENDANTS

The Testimony of a Wedding Guest.

Anna Peet of Bridgeport aged 69 years of the County of Fairfield and State of Connecticut wife of Elizah Peet being sworn deposeth and saith that she was present at the marriage of Thomas Solly and Eunice Dorfee, said Thomas Solly and Eunice Dorfee were married in the Parrish of Stratford by the Rev. Robert Ross who was at that time the ordained Minister over Stratford Parrish, said deponent further saith that the said Thomas and Eunice were married before the close of the War of the Revolutionary as she remembers that said Thomas had on his regimentals when said marriage took place that she has allways been acquainted with said Eunice and that she has never been married since the death of the said Thomas Solly, said deponent does not remember the year the marriage took place.

[Signed] ANNA PEET.

Sworn and subscribed before me.

[Signed] MARK MOORE, Judge.

Another Wedding Guest.

Olive Treadwell of Fairfield aged 69 years of the County of Fairfield and State of Connecticut being sworn deposeth and saith that she was present at the marriage of Thomas Solly and Eunice Dorfee, said Thomas and Eunice were married in the Parrish of Stratford by the Rev. Robert Ross who was at that time the ordained Minister over said Stratford Parrish, said Olive saith that the said Thomas and Eunice were married before the close of the War of the Revolutionary she remembers that the said Thomas had on his soldier's dress at the time, they were married, after said marriage said deponent very well remembers having seen Thomas in his soldier dress several times before the close of the War of the Revolutionary Said deponent further saith that ever since their marriage she has been acquainted with the said Thomas and Eunice, said Thomas died about seven years ago with the Gravel and said deponent further saith that the said Eunice has never been married since the death of said Thomas Solly.

[Signed] OLIVE TREADWELL
X her mark.

Sworn and subscribed to before me

MARK MOORE Judge.

The foregoing Depositions of Anna Peet and Olive Treadwell subscribed and sworn to in open court and is part of the case of the proceedings in the case of the above named applicant herein certified under

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

my hand and seal of office and I further certify that said Anna and Olive are credible witnesses and persons of fair character for truth and varasity.

[Signed] R. L. NICHOLS, *Clerk.*

The Testimony of Eunice Solley's Sister, Polly Duffee Fanton.

I Polly Fanton of the Town of Redding in the County of Fairfield and State of Connecticut of the age of 67 years depose and say that I am well acquainted with Eunice Solley of Bridgeport in said County widow of Thomas Solley a Revolutionary Pensioner and have been ever since I was a small child, and can well remember that she was married to said Thomas Solley while very young, and I have heard her Mother say repeatedly that Eunice was married at the age of fifteen years and I think I remember that I went to see her said Eunice Solley at the house of John Knapp of Fairfield while her husband was in the service of the United States war. I know she was married when I went to see her I never saw him in the War, but I saw him frequently after they were married about that time. I was well acquainted with said Thomas Solley until his death.

[Signed] POLLY J. FANTON.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Fairfield County ss Redding 1st October 1836.

Personally appears Polly Fanton and subscribed and made oath to the truth of the above Deposition who I certify is well known to me, is a credible witness and I believe her testimony to be true.

Sworn and subscribed before me

[Signed] THOMAS B. FANTON
Justice of the Peace.

The Testimony of Eunice's Son-in-law, Russel Morgan, with Whom She Spent Her Last Days at Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Russell Morgan of the Town of Bridgeport in the County of Fairfield and State of Connecticut 40 years of age Deposeth and saith that he married the daughter of Thomas and Eunice Solley and has often heard said Thomas and Eunice speak of the circumstances of her being married to him at about the age of fifteen years and of his being in service a long time after they were married and of her living with Mr. John Knapp while he was in service in the town of Fairfield in the Revolutionary that he knows that said Thomas died at Southbury County of Newhaven State aforesaid on or about the month of June 1829 with the disease called the Gravel which he allways understood was the cause of his death, has often heard them say they were married by the Rev. Robert Ross while said Thomas was in service also heard

HIS DESCENDANTS

old Mrs. Sherwood speak of the circumstances of his wife's mother being married to said Thomas while he was a soldier in the Revolutionary War, and deponent further says that he has no more doubt in his mind that said Thomas and Eunice was legally married in the time of the Revolution than if he had been present at their wedding.

And further testifies said Eunice has never married since, and that she now lives in his family.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss Bridgeport Oct. 4, 1836

Personally appears Russell Morgan and subscribed and made oath to the above deposition who is a credible witness well know to me.

Sworn and subscribed before me

[Signed]

ISAAC SHERMAN

Justice of Peace.

These certify that on a careful examination the marriage of Thomas Solly and Eunice Dorfee does not appear to have been recorded on the records of the Town of Fairfield of which I have the custody as the town clerk of said town.—

Also that it was not the general practice to record marriages before and during the Revolutionary War.

Fairfield Oct. 7 1836.

[Signed]

ALBERT SAMUEL ROWLAND.

Town Clerk.

FAIRFIELD COUNTY SS *Fairfield* October 7, 1836

Personally appeared Samuel Rowland Esq. and made oath to the truth of the above certificate by him subscribed.

Before me

[Signed]

THOMAS B. OSBOURNE

Justice of Peace.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss. Bridgeport, October D 1836.

I Roswell L. Nichols Clerk of the Probate Court in and for the District of Stratford in said County and State aforesaid hereby certify that Mark Moore is Judge of said Court and that Isaac Sherman and Thomas B. Fanton and Thomas B. Osbourne are all Justices of the Peace in and for said Fairfield County duly commissioned and qualified, that their commission will expire in June 1837 and that their signatures to the Depositions of Anna Peet, Olive Treadwell, Polly Fanton, Russel Morgan, and Samuel Rowland are their genuine signatures.

Given under my hand and seal of said Court the day and year above written.

[Signed]

R. L. NICHOLS, *Clerk.*

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

A Curious Testimony as to How Church Records Have Been Kept.

I hereby certify that I am Clerk of the Stratford Congregational Church now located in Bridgeport and on a careful examination of the Records of said Church do find that the Rev. Robert Ross was ordained the Minister over said Church November 28, D 1753 (which Church was then located in the Parrish of Stratford said Parrish being composed of a part of the towns of Fairfield and Stratford in Fairfield County State of Connecticut) and that he continued the ministry thereof until he died August 29th 1799 and I further certify that it does not appear from said Records that Rev. Robert Ross ever recorded during his long ministry a single marriage I further certify that I examined said Record to find the marriage of Thomas Solly and Eunice Dorfee, and I further certify that I have been acquainted with said Thomas and Eunice for a number of years and fully believe they were married by the Rev. Robert Ross as she has stated.

[Signed] ISAAC SHERMAN
Clerk of Baptist Church.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT:—SS
Bridgeport Oct. 11, D 1836.

Personally appears Isaac Sherman in open Court and subscribed and made oath to the foregoing Deposition who is a creditable witness

[Signed] R. L. NICHOLS, *Clerk.*

Bridgeport, Oct. 11, 1836.

SIR: I forward to you the Pension Application of the widow Eunice Solley now residing in Bridgeport, you will if you please forward her certificate to me.

Yours respectfully,

ISAAC SHERMAN.

J. L. EDWARDS, ESQ., *Commissioner of Pensions.*

WAR DEPARTMENT, PENSION OFFICE,
Nov. 10, 1836.

SIR: The papers in the case of Mrs. Eunice Solly widow of Thomas Solley, deceased, have been examined and placed on our file.

Marriages are so generally matters of records in towns, churches and families, that it is proper to require some evidence respecting their existence in each case altho' the records of the town may have been imperfect and omissive, the marriage may be established by those of the church or family.

She should make a deposition of all the facts within her recollection which may show the time of the enlistment, service, and discharge of her late husband.

Very Respectfully,

[Signed] W. M. ABBE,
J. L. EDWARDS.

ISAAC SHERMAN, ESQ., Bridgeport, Conn.

HIS DESCENDANTS

Bridgeport, Conn, Nov. 18, 1836.

DEAR SIR: I send you the additional declaration of the widow Eunice Solley which I trust will prove satisfactory together with your letter of the 10th of Nov. 1836. Yours very truly,

[Signed] ISAAC SHERMAN, ESQ.

J. L. EDWARDS, ESQ.

Commissioner of Pensions, Washington, D. C.

Eunice had made a mistake as to her age, and also seems to have forgotten the rank of her husband in the army. She was at this time very infirm, and could not write with her hand. She again makes a deposition and applies for more pension money, which she secures.

Eunice Solley's Second Declaration for Pension, November 22, 1836.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss.

On this 22nd day of November D 1836 personally appeared before the Probate Court in and for the District of Stratford in said County and State aforesaid Eunice Solley a resident of said Bridgeport who being first duly sworn according to Law doth on her oath make the following Declaration in addition to her former Declaration to obtain the benefit of the provision made by the Act of Congress passed July 4, 1836.

That she stated in her first Declaration to which this is in addition that her husband Thomas Solley belonging to Capt. Staunton's Company and Col. Talmage's Regiment which was not quite correct and she will now state that he was a private soldier in Capt. Staunton's Company in Col. Sheldon's Regiment and that Major Talmages was the Major of said Regiment and that Lt. Bull was his Lt. That she resided in the Parrish of Stratford at her father's for some months after she was married and supported herself by spinning for her neighbors and for her father she removed to Fairfield in the House with Mr. John Knapp which her husband hired for her to live in and keep house while her husband was in service in said Staunton's Company, that before she removed from her father's her husband came to see her occasionally from the Army and returned and after they lived at John Knapp's he used to come to her at different times and return remembers his Company was stationed a part of the time after she was married to him in the Town of Fairfield in the Parrish of Greenfield and at Hills' Farm also remembers that after she was married her husband was taken sick down towards New York at a place she thinks was called Stanwick [probably Stanwich] where he was then in service in said

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

Staunton's Company thinks it was soon after they were married that she went with the Mother of Nehemiah Odell to see him at said Stanwick and that said Nehemiah belonged to the said Capt. Staunton's Company with her husband and both quartered at the same House together in said Stanwick also remembers going to Fairfield and seeing the troops excused to which her husband belonged remembers seeing her husband discharged and thinks it is with his papers at Washington sent when he applied for a pension is confident that her husband served about two years after they were married, and that her husband allways said he was in service three or four years and that he enlisted at sometime during the War to serve during the War and did serve faithfully until the Peace and had an honorable discharge. That she can make proof of his service but it would cause her expense and trouble as the persons who served with him are nearly or quite all dead and as she confidently believes that her husband's service is fully and satisfactorily proved in his application to obtain a pension under the Act of 1818 she has not made any effort now to prove his service and feels confident that she is entitled to a full pension on account of her husband's service and that she is very poor and feels that it would be a hard case to be excluded from the benefit of the Pension Law because she has lost the Record of her marriage and in consequence of the neglect of the Rev. Mr. Ross not Recording her marriage as he ought. That her husband allways told her that he enlisted in Fairfield eleven months before he was married cannot now remember at what place her husband was discharged but knows that he was discharged at the time Peace was established. That her husband was in service about two years or more after they were married and that she remembers of drawing rations on her husband's account of Ezra Selley a part of the time and a part of the time of Gedeon Hubbell of said Fairfield and both of which persons dealt out provisions for the troops and that she drew rations as said Solley's wife.

[Signed] EUNICE SOLLEY

X her mark.

Signed in presence of

ISAAC SHERMAN

WILSON HAWLEY.

Sworn to and subscribed on the day and year above written before.

[Signed] MARK MOORE, *Judge.*

And the said Court do hereby declare their opinion after investigation of the matter, and after putting the interrogatives presented by the War Department that the above named applicant is the widow of Thomas Solley and who served for the states.

[Signed] MARK MOORE, *Judge.*

HIS DESCENDANTS

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield *Fairfield* November 19th, 1836.

Rhoda Parrot testifieth and saith that she is seventy two years of age the 27th instant November 1836 that she was well acquainted with said Thomas Solly and his wife recollects that they resided with her brother John Knapp—can't say what year it was—but thinks it was in the time of the War—says that Eunice Durfey was married to Thomas Solly when about fifteen years of age—was very young when she married. Saw them at meeting together before they came to live with her brother John Knapp—knows that they were married before she saw them at meeting—and further said deponent saith not.

[Signed] RHODA PARROT.

Sworn to before me

[Signed] JOSEPH BANKS,
Justice of the Peace.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss. *Fairfield* November 19, 1836

Personally appeared Rhoda Parrot and subscribed and made oath to the truth of the above Deposition who I certify is a credible witness well known to me.

[Signed] JOSEPH BANKS
Justice of the Peace.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss. *Fairfield* November 19, 1836.

Squire Parrot of said Fairfield being sixty four years of age the 3rd day of June last testifieth and saith that he was well acquainted with Thomas Solly and his wife—knows that they lived with John Knapp in the time of the Revolutionary War were married before they came to live there with John Knapp at the time he was the said Thomas Solly was discharged from the service he was living with John Knapp. And further said deponent saith not.

[Signed] SQUIRE PARROT.

FAIRFIELD COUNTY SS *Fairfield* November 19, 1836.

Personally appeared Squire Parrot and made oath to the truth set forth in the above deposition

Before me [Signed] JOSEPH BANKS,
Justice of the Peace.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss. November 19, 1836

Personally appeared Squire Parrot and subscribed and made oath to the truth of the above deposition who I certify is a credible witness known to me

[Signed] JOSEPH BANKS,
Justice of the Peace.

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

Seth Hall of Bridgeport County of Fairfield and State of Connecticut a pensioner of the United States Deposeth and saith that he has been acquainted with Eunice Solly who has now applied for a Pension ever since she was a little child and lived in the same Parish of Stratford at the time said Eunice was married in said Parish by Rev. Mr. Ross, being at that time the ordained minister over said Parish and remembers that said Eunice was very young when she was married and remember that it was a matter talked of in the neighborhood that she should marry a soldier and partickalarly that she was too young to be married. Can testify positively that said Solly was in service in the Revolution when he was married to said Eunice and sometime after thinks until the Peace in 1783 remembers she went out to work after she was married and worked in his fathers family while said Thomas was in service—also remembers that he said to be in service under Major Talmage in the Town of Fairfield that said Solly used to come home from service after he was married and return again and fully believes that he served until the Peace. Allways understood that he had an honorable discharge and was a faithful soldier—cannot say the year said Solly was married to said Eunice but knows that his deponents brother Danuel Hall was married in the year 1782 and remembers perfectly well that said Solly was married before said Danuel was, should think a year or more also remembers said Solly and Eunice went to live in the House of John Knapp in Fairfield when he was in service under Major Talmage at Fairfield. [Signed] SETH HALL.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss Bridgeport November 18, 1836.

Personally appeared Seth Hall and subscribed and made oath to the truth of the foregoing Deposition who I certify is a credible witness well know to me.

Sworn and subscribed before me.

[Signed] ISAAC SHERMAN,
Justice of the Peace.

Danuel Hall of the Town of Trumbull in the County of Fairfield and State of Connecticut 78 years of age Deposeth and saith that he has been acquainted with Eunice Solly ever since she was a child and resided in the Parish of Stratford at the time said Eunice was married to said Thomas Solly by the said Rev. Ross who was the ordained minister over said Parish at that time cannot remember positively what year said Eunice was married to said Thomas but can testify that they were married before deponent was in the time of the Revolutionary War and that he the deponent has a record of his own marriage in his bible at

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home which according to that record took place April 30th 1782 and think they were married as much as a year or a year and a half before deponent—remembers that said Eunice was very young thinks she was not more than 14 or 15 years of age and that it was talked of in the neighborhood as an extraordinary circumstance that such a young girl should marry a soldier in the service remembers that she was often joked that she should marry an enlisted soldier—remembers that said Solly was in service after they were married under Major Talmage at Fairfield remembers some of his fellow soldiers going home with him after he was married; that he cannot be mistaken as to the fact of said Solly was in the service after he was married, remembers his moving his wife to Fairfield while he was in service and although he was not at the wedding nor in the service with said Solly he has not more doubt of his being lawfully married by the Rev. Mr. Ross and that he was in service under Major Talmage after his marriage than if he had seen them married and had been him in service. Has been well acquainted with said Thomas Solly ever since the Revolutionary War, and that said Eunice has not married since said Thomas's death but is now living at Bridgeport as his widow.

[Signed] DANUEL HALL.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss. Bridgeport. November 19, 1836.

Personally appeared Danuel Hall and subscribed and made oath to the truth of the foregoing Deposition who I certify is a credible witness known to me.

Sworn and subscribed before me

[Signed] ISAAC SHERMAN
Justice of the Peace.

Squire Odell of the Town of Stratford in Fairfield County state of Connecticut aged 68 years deposeth and saith that he resided during the Revolutionary War in the Parrish of Stratford as a neighbor to Eunice Dorfee and remembers that said Eunice was married to Thomas Solly in the time of the War when Deponent was a lad, by the Rev. Mr. Robert Ross and remembers that it was a matter talked of in the neighborhood at the time because she was so young—cannot now remember how old she was but knows she was very young to be married, deponent cannot say positively that he was at the wedding but thinks he was and what caused him to remember so particularly is his brother Nehemiah who is now dead wanted to have said Eunice and remembers he said he would break up the matter between her and said Solly—has allways known said Solly since he was married and his wife Eunice since she was a child—and remembers that his brother said Nehemiah was in service in

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

the Revolutionary War in Major Talmage's Company or Regiment which was stationed at Fairfield remembers going to Fairfield to carry cake and thinks his Mother sent to deponent's brother Nehemiah and remembers said Solly was in service with said Nehemiah under Major Talmage at said Fairfield and used to come from the Army home and return together which he is positive was after he was married to said Eunice because said Solly never lived in his neighborhood until after he was married.

[Signed] SQUIRE ODELL.

Witnesses to Odell Signature.

Russel Morgan and Nelson Jennings.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss. Fairfield November 16, 1836

Personally appeared Squire Odell and subscribed and made oath to the truth of the foregoing Deposition who I certify is a credible witness well known to me.

Sworn and subscribed before me

[Signed] ISAAC SHERMAN,
Justice of the Peace.

Another Wedding Guest.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT.

County of Fairfield ss. Fairfield November 19, 1836

Heziah Sherwood of said Fairfield being seventy nine years of age the 20th day of January next Deposeth and saith that she was near neighbor to Eunice Durfey—that the Rev. Mr. Ross was sent for to marry Eunice Durfey to Thomas Solly on Thanksgiving Day that Mr. Ross said he must marry them first for he had another couple to marry—said deponent was present at that wedding—said that she thinks said Eunice was about fifteen years of age at that time understood that said Thomas Solly and his wife lived at John Knapp's after they were married—thinks that it was in the time of the War—and further said deponent saith not.

[Signed] HEZIAH SHERWOOD.

FAIRFIELD COUNTY SS. *Fairfield November 19, 1836.*

Personally appeared Heziah Sherwood and made oath to the truth of the facts set forth in above deposition.

Before me.

[Signed] JOSEPH BANKS
Justice of the Peace.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss Fairfield November 19, 1836

Personally appeared Heziah Sherwood and subscribed and made oath to the truth of the above deposition who I certify is a credible witness known to me.

[Signed] JOSEPH BANKS,
Justice of the Peace.

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WAR DEPARTMENT, PENSION OFFICE,
Nov. 29th, 1836.

SIR: The additional papers in the case of Mrs. Eunice Solley, widow of Thomas Solley have been examined and placed on our files.

The evidence as to the date of the marriage is unsatisfactory. The witnesses seem to rely upon mere recollection unaided by records which might be satisfactory in some cases but cannot be deemed so when their evidence is impugned by the statement of the husband in 1820, under oath who stated that she was at that time 53 years old which would make her 69 now instead of 72 years old as alleged

The Department is constrained to require further proof (records if attainable) as to the date of her marriage and of her birth.

Very respectfully,
[Signed] W. M. ABBE,
J. L. EDWARDS.

ISAAC SHERMAN, ESQ.,
Bridgeport, R. I.

Eunice Solley's Third Declaration for Widow's Pension.

Bridgeport State of Connecticut Dec. 16, 1836.

DEAR SIR: Enclosed is the papers of Widow Eunice Solly as amended with additional proof I am well acquainted with the witnesses who have given their depositions in her case and have full confidence in their testimony—also am well acquainted with the applicant who is an inoffensive indigent widow, and entirely dependent on her children for support: and I am fully satisfied that her husband was in service after she married him. I very much regret that she is not able to produce any records but to my mind the testimony of Daniel Hall whose Deposition accompanied her second Declaration and the Deposition of Polly Fanton accompanying her last declaration being guided by Record evidence is conclusive, together with the other testimony.

Yours respectfully,
ISAAC SHERMAN,

J. L. EDWARDS, ESQ., *Commissioner of Pensions,*

P. S. Your letter of Nov. 29th, 1836 was directed to Bridgeport R. I. when it should have been Bridgeport, Connecticut.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss. Bridgeport.

On this 16th day of December D 1836 personally appeared widow Eunice Solly before the Court of Probate for the District of Stratford in said County and State aforesaid and having been duly sworn according

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to Law doth make the following addition to her previous declaration to obtain the benefit of the Pension Act passed July 4, 1836.

And to correct her first Declaration wherein she stated she was 72 years old (which statement was made without any Record to guide her Recollection) and now on an examination of that subject again and calculating from the age of her sister Polly Fanton (whose Deposition is annexed and who has a record of her age and who was born next after said Eunice Solley and who their Mother allways told her said Eunice that her sister Polly was between two and three years younger than herself and haveing been informed that her husband in 1820 stated her age to be 53 years old at which time they had a Record from these facts she is now fully satisfied that she was mistaken when she stated her age to be 72 years and would therefore correct her first Declaration by now stating that she shall be seventy years old if she lives until the 25th of December D 1836 and that she allways understood that her sister Polly was born in March and that herself in December on Christmas Day and there is one fact that she stated in relation to her marriage; that she was married a few days before she was fifteen year old in which she feels she cannot be mistaken and also feels that she cannot be mistaken as to the fact of her husband being in service after she was married to him until the Peace in Col. Sheldon's and Talmeges Regiment and that if her age is now stated correctly which she fully believes it is she was married in the month of December 13th, D 1781. She does not now know as it is possible any Record of her birth or her marriage but the Depositions of Danuel Hall and her sister Polly Fanton whose statements are both guided by Record evidence she earnestly hopes will prove satisfactory.

Signed in presence of Isaac Sherman, Russel Morgan.

[Signed] EUNICE SOLLEY
her X Mark.

Sworn to and subscribed on the day and year above written Before
MARK MOORE, *Judge.*

And the said Court do hereby declare their opinion after investigation of the matter and after putting the interrogatives presented by the War Department that the above named applicant is the Widow of Thomas Solley who served for the States and the Court further certifies that they are fully satisfied that said Eunice Solley made a wrong statement in her first Declaration in relation to her age from the imperfection of her memory and not from any wicked design.

[Signed] MARK MOORE, *Judge.*

Attest: R. L. NICHOLS, *Clerk.*

HIS DESCENDANTS

The following deposition makes a statement about the death of Eunice and Polly's mother, bringing it to about 1834. Eunice was born in 1767. Calculating that Eunice's mother was about 20 when she was married, 1766, would make her about 88 when she died.

I Polly Fanton of Redding Fairfield County and State of Connecticut being of Lawful age depose and say I am sixty-seven years of age the first day of last March according to the Record I have kept and the Record that my parents gave me when I was quite young also I know that my *sister Eunice is the oldest of my father's children* and my Mother has allways told me from my youth up (*until she died about two years ago*) my sister Eunice was two years and about three months older than I am and further the deponent say not. [Signed] POLLY FANTON.

FAIRFIELD ss *Redding* December 13, D1836.

The aforesaid Polly Fanton was examined cautioned and sworn to the truth of the foregoing deposition by her subscribed by me.

[Signed] AARON SANFORD
Justice of Peace.

I Edmund Fanton of Bridgeport in Fairfield County State of Connecticut of the age of 41 years Depose and say that I am the son of Polly Fanton whose Deposition appears above and remember to have seen a Record of my Mother's birth and that according to that Record she was born in March 1769, and furthermore allways understood that my Aunt Eunice Solly who has now applied for a pension and who is the same person refered to in my Mother's Deposition was older than my Mother and was the oldest of the family of Thomas and Elizabeth Dorfee—and the Deponent fully believes said Eunice Solly to be now seventy years of age. [Signed] EDMOND FANTON.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss Bridgeport, December 16, 1836.

Personally appeared Edmond Fanton and made oath and subscribed the foregoing Deposition, who I certify is a credible witness well known to me.

Sworn and subscribed before me

[Signed] ISAAC SHERMAN
Justice of the Peace.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss Fairfield December 13th, 1836.

I Abraham Morehouse of said Fairfield being of Lawful age depose and say that I am seventy-eight years of age the 26th day of last March

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

and that I was married the 17th day of February 1780 that I believe that Samuel Silliman was married the last of the same year that I saw, or the year following to the best of my recollection and further said Deponent saith not. [Signed] ABRAHAM MOREHOUSE.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss *Fairfield* December 13th, 1836.

Personally appeared the aforesaid Abraham Morehouse who being cautioned and sworn made oath to the truth of the above Deposition by him subscribed.

Before me [Signed] JOSEPH BANKS,
Justice of the Peace.

I hereby certify that Abraham Morehouse sustains a good character as to truth and varasity that I am well acquainted him him.

[Signed] JOSEPH BANKS,
Justice of the Peace.

Attest:

Eleanor Hill the wife of David Hill Esq., of the Town of Fairfield in the County of Fairfield and State of Connecticut aged 69 years the 21 day of November last 1836, Dopeseth and sayeth that she was well acquainted with Eunice Durfey when she was a girl who is now the widow of Thomas Solly—that she attended the same Meeting—remembered that said Eunice and Deponent is about the same age—thinks that she the said Eunice is a little older than herself—that has allways been her opinion and that she and the said Eunice were near the same age. And further says that she Deponent was born on the 21 day of November 1769—thinks that she cannot be mistaken as to her own age nor that of Eunice Durfey said Deponent is of the opinion that she was married very young according to her best recollection—And further Deponent sayeth not. [Signed] ELEANOR HILL.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss *Fairfield* December 13th, 1836

Personally appeared Eleanor Hill of said Fairfield and subscribed and made oath to the truth of the foregoing Deposition, who I certify is a lady well known to me as the wife of Judge Hill and is a credible witness.

Before me [Signed] JOSEPH BANKS,
Justice of Peace.

I Benjamin Brothwell of the Town of Fairfield and State of Connecticut 76 years of age the 3rd day of November last 1836—Deposeth and sayeth that he has allways been well acquainted with Eunice Durfey ever since she was a small child—resided in the Parrish of Stratford

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near her father's—thinks that said Eunice is about seventy years of age—was married when very young to Thomas Solly—cannot state exactly the time—In the year 1781 said deponent went to West Point in the Militia returned from West Point in the month of November 1781. In the year 1782 said Deponent was on guard in Capt. Danuel Lacy's Company—was sick during the winter of 1781-2 at home in the Parrish of Stratford in said Fairfield—while on guard in Capt. Lacy's Company in 1781-2 remembers perfectly well that said Eunice and Thomas was then man and wife—and further said Deponent sayeth not.

[Signed] BENJAMIN BROTHWELL.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss Fairfield December 15, 1836

Personally appeared Benjamin Brothwell of said Fairfield and subscribed and made oath to the truth of the foregoing Deposition who I certify is a credible witness sworn and subscribed before me

[Signed] JOSEPH BANKS,
Justice of the Peace.

The Testimony of Another Wedding Guest.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Fairfield County ss Fairfield December 13, 1836.

I Hezia Sherwood of said Fairfield being of Lawful age depose and say that I shall be seventy-eight years of age the 20th of January next and that I attended the wedding of Eunice Durfey—that the Rev. Mr Ross married said Eunice and Thomas—that Mr. Ross was in a hurry as he had another couple to marry—who I understood to be Samuel Silliman (that Mr. Ross was to marry after he married Eunice Durfey and Thomas Solly—It was on Thanksgiving day—according to my best recollection—I think that Eunice Durfey was not so old as I am by about eight years. I was present at the wedding of Eunice Durfey and Thomas Solly and saw them married and further Deponent saith not.

[Signed] HEZICA SHERWOOD.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss Fairfield, December 13, 1836.

Personally appeared Hezica Sherwood of said Fairfield and after being cautioned and examined and sworn made oath to the truth of the above Deposition by her subscribed. Before me

[Signed] JOSEPH BANKS,
Justice of the Peace.

I hereby certify that Hezica Sherwood sustains a good character as to truth and varasity—being well acquainted with her.

Attest: JOSEPH BANKS,

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

I Roswell L. Nichols Clerk of the Court aforesaid do hereby certify that the foregoing contains the original proceedings of the said Court in the matter of the application of Eunice Solly for a pension In Testimony whereof I have herewith set my hand and seal of office this 16th day of December 1836. [Signed] R. L. NICHOLS, Clerk.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

County of Fairfield ss Bridgeport.

I Roswell L. Nichols Clerk of the Probate Court in and for the District of Stratford in said County and State aforesaid hereby certify that Isaac Sherman, Aaron Sanford, and Joseph Banks are all Justices of the Peace in and for said Fairfield County duly commissioned and qualified that their commissions will expire in June 1837 and their signatures to the Depositions of Polly Fanton, Edmond Fanton, Abraham Morehouse, Eleanor Hill, Benjamin Brothwell and Hezica Sherwood are all their genuine signatures.

Given under my hand and the seal of said Court the 16th day of December D 1836.

Attest: R. L. NICHOLS Clerk

Endorsed:—Thos. Solley:—Col. Sheldon's Regiment, :—Connecticut line:—1781-3 years.

The Finding of Thomas Solley's Rank in Service.

Bridgeport Conn. Sept. 13th 1838.

SIR: A very respectable gentleman has recently informed me that in the list of pensioners heretofore published, Thomas Solley appears to have been a Sergeant in the Connecticut line.

In accordance with his wish I deem it proper to ask you by an examination of the documents accompanying Solley's application for a pension under the act of March 18, 1818 and the roll of Sheldon's Regiment whether he served as a Sergeant during the Revolutionary War.

I understand the widow of Thomas Solly has been allowed a pension for his service as a private, in the cavalry and that probably her declaration did not state that he served as a *sergeant* notwithstanding she represented to the gentlemen who drew it that her husband did actually serve, in that capacity.

If you should find in the office satisfactory evidence that Thomas Solly served as a Sergeant in behalf of his widow, whom I do not know, but believe to be in reduced circumstances I request you to cause the error to be corrected, by making the additional allowance, in her case, which the evidence, in your keeping may prove her to be entitled to.

With much esteem,

I am your obedient servant,

[No signature]

J. L. EDWARDS, ESQ.,

G. Commissioner of Pensions

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Eunice Solley's papers were finally accepted, and pension granted, with an extra allowance, together with back pay. She lived to enjoy this provision only four years, dying December 31, 1840, when she was 73 years old.

The following is from the government records at Washington, D. C.:

Inscribed on the roll of Connecticut at the rate of \$100 per annum to commence on the 4th day of March 1831.

Certificate of Pension issued the 25th day of March 1837 and sent to Hon. G. Tomlinson.

Arrears to the 4th of March, 37	\$600.00
Semi-annual Allowances to Sept. 37	50.00
	<hr/>
	\$650.00

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT WE REALLY KNOW ABOUT THOMAS AND EUNICE SOLLEY.

THOMAS Solley was born in England, August 14, 1759. The name of his parents and the place of his birth are both unknown. We do not know what his father's occupation was nor to which class in society the family belonged. Although the name Solley in England is a good one, and one well known, we have as yet been unable to connect him with it.

Thomas Solley's coming to America seems to have proved a sort of dead line, for almost nothing has come down to us from beyond that event. The only things which are in possession of his descendants are the three following traditions: One, that his father was one of the keepers at Windsor Castle, another, that Thomas was at school in London, and still another, that he was learning a trade at London; but of these things we have only traditions which curiously have been preserved by nearly all of his descendants.

The one thing which we really know of Thomas Solley's childhood and youth is, that while he was playing at a game of quoits with some other lads, King George's military "press gang" came upon them, captured him, and pressed him into the military service of the kingdom, without even allowing him to return home and say good-bye to his people. He was then sent to America, with His Majesty's soldiers, to fight in the war of the American Revolution.

The British soldiers with whom he was placed were located somewhere near New York city, possibly on Long Island. How long he served in the British army in this country we do not know, but it could not have been long, because he

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deserted from the British, and reenlisted in the Continental army at Northampton, Massachusetts, in January, 1781. Thomas was then only twenty-one years and five months of age. Probably he was captured in England somewhere about the time he was nineteen or twenty years old, or even younger. A year of dramatic events for one so young.

What his motives were for deserting the British army he never made clear to his descendants. Whether it was resentment for being captured by the royal press gang, and forced into military service; whether it was the growing national dislike of royalty, militarism and oppression; or whether it was a delicate constitution which suffered in military service under the conditions of a strange, new, rugged and changeful climate, we do not know. It may have been any one, or all of these things. Later events in his life point to all of them.

The first definite thing which we know of him after his desertion from the British army is that he located at Fairfield, Connecticut, which he afterwards gives as his place of residence. From this place he went to enlist in the Continental army in January, 1781. That was eleven months before he married Eunice Duffee. Thomas tells us in his first deposition which he made to obtain a pension in 1818, that he went to Northampton, Massachusetts, and enlisted in the Continental army from that place.

The military record of Thomas Solley is as follows:

Length of service in the Continental army, from January, 1781, to August, 1783, two years and seven months.

Rank, a private. Afterwards he was raised to rank of sergeant.

The officers under whom service was rendered were Capt. Stanton's Company of six troop of light horse under command of Col. Elisha Sheldon.

Staff, 2nd Continental Dragoons.

He must have come into favor in the Continental army, for he was raised to the position of sergeant.

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The Continental army was not very active in this section. See History of Fairfield, Pages 387-8-9.—July 6, 1779.

Thomas chummed in the army with a young American soldier by the name of Nehemiah Odell, of Stratford, Connecticut, who used to take him home with him on visits. The Odells were a good family, one of whom is recorded as "Squire" Odell. It is probable that on one of these visits Thomas first met Eunice Duffee, whose home was also at Stratford. The pension papers show us that there was a rivalry between Nehemiah and Thomas, as Nehemiah wanted to have Eunice for his wife, and threatened to "break up the matter" between her and Thomas, and this is probably the reason for the hasty marriage of Thomas and Eunice, while he was "in service," and only eleven months after he enlisted in the Continental army.

Of the family of Duffee we know but little. Eunice was the oldest child of Thomas and Elizabeth Duffee, (also spelled Durfee, Dorfee, Durphy, and Duffy,) and was born December 25, 1767, at Stratford, Connecticut. The Duffees had other children, and we know that Eunice had a sister by the name of Polly, who was two and one-half years younger than herself, who afterwards married Roland Fanton, and went to reside at Redding Ridge, Connecticut. The mother of Eunice and Polly Duffee lived until 1834.—See pension papers, deposition of Polly Fanton.

The *Fantons were a well-to-do people, and, later on, one Thomas Fanton, who was justice of the peace at Redding, when Eunice Solley applied for her widow's pension, took the deposition, October 7, 1836, of Polly Fanton, who was then sixty-seven years of age. Polly Fanton had a son, Edmond Fanton, who later resided at Bridgeport. She also declares in her deposition that she had known Thomas

*NOTE—I found on an old gravestone at top of hill at Lyon's Plains that one John Fanton died 1795. That is the only gravestone of a Fanton which I have found.—E. J. M.

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Solley until the day of his death. I was told by an aged gentleman whom I visited at Easton, in 1897, that "Polly Fanton was one of the best women that ever lived."

We also know from the Weston town records that Thomas Duffee had property. He probably moved from Stratford to Weston, following his son Thomas, who became one of the founders of the town when it was set off from old Fairfield. Or possibly it may have been that Thomas Duffee, owning property in Weston, then a part of the town of Fairfield, and called North Fairfield Parish, sent the young couple, Thomas and Eunice, there to occupy it as a marriage portion. At any rate, there are nine property transactions recorded on the Weston town records under the name of Thomas and Elizabeth Duffee. We find recorded there also property transactions under the name of Daniel and Cornelius Duffee, both of whom may have been sons of Thomas and Elizabeth, as we find the name Daniel in the family later on in Mercy Ann Solley's line, who called one of her sons by this name.

We also find the name Bennett in the property records of Weston, and also on the two subscription papers for Thomas Solley's benefit, which may also point to another daughter in the Duffee family, who was married to one John Bennett, as both names appear repeatedly in the Solley family traditions in the person of one always called "Cousin John Bennett."

Thomas and Eunice were married on Thanksgiving day, December 13, 1782, at her home in Stratford, where a regular wedding party was made for them. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Robert Ross, of Stratford, who was the ordained minister there from November 28, 1753, to August 29, 1799, over the Stratford Congregational (Baptist) church, in a parish which afterwards became a part of Bridgeport. Several of the guests at the wedding remembered that the Rev. Mr. Ross was in a great hurry, as "he had also another couple to marry that day."

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The Rev. Robert Ross seems to have been a very negligent man as to "temporals," and we are told later on down the years, by one Isaac Sherman, "clerk of Baptist church, Bridgeport, Connecticut," that "it does not appear from said records that Rev. Robert Ross ever recorded during his long ministry a single marriage." This caused Eunice a great deal of trouble when, as a feeble old woman, she applied for her widow's pension in 1836.

Our information at this point is from the affidavits which were given by relatives and old neighbors at the time Eunice sought for her widow's pension in 1836, which is a wonderful showing of a large number of intimate friends, who were still living after the long interval of fifty-four years, who had "known Eunice from a child." In these papers three persons testify as having attended the wedding of Thomas and Eunice.

The wedding produced a great deal of comment at that time, first because Eunice was so young, only fourteen years eleven months of age, and also because she should marry a comparative stranger in the young Englishman, and an enlisted soldier "in uniform." We are also told that Thomas visited Eunice a good many times before and after he was married, "always wearing his army uniform," which created a great deal of curiosity; and that she was often joked about her marrying an "enlisted soldier," while he was in service.

NOTE—Fairfield County Historical Society, page 21, year 1887, we find copy of an old account against Rev. Robert Ross.

History of Bridgeport, page 6, mentions Rev. Robert Ross as the minister at Stratfield Congregational church, 1751-1796. Page 8 of same book mentions a ball of fire seen from Stratfield on February 2, 1775.

Bridgeport incorporated as a borough 1800, town 1821, city 1836. Before that it was called Newfield, and the north end Pequónnock.

In History of Fairfield, Page 464, Vol. 2, Experience of a Yale student. Same book, Pages 387, 388, 389, burning of Fairfield by British, July 6 or 7, 1779.

Stratfield is a very old village, north of Bridgeport, and I wonder sometimes if they were not married here instead of at Stratford.

Stratfield may then have been a part of Stratford or Fairfield.

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After her marriage Eunice lived with her parents for several months, earning her living by spinning for her father and the neighbors, during which time her husband visited her. Once Eunice visited Thomas when he was very sick, (while his company was stationed at a place said to be called Stanwich, near New York city,) going to see him in company with the mother of her old lover, Nehemiah Odell. This is the first hint which we have of Thomas's delicate constitution, which finally incapacitated him for service.

Thomas's company was finally stationed at Greenfield Hill, in the town of Fairfield, where we are told that it remained for two consecutive winters, and probably until peace was declared. About this time he hired rooms for Eunice to keep house in, at the home of one John Knapp, and moved her there, probably in order to have her nearer to him. (See History of Fairfield, Vol. 2, Pages 387-8-9. July 6, 1779.) Here the uniformed soldier often visited his young wife, as many of the affidavits show, and we are told that he sometimes took his soldier friends home with him. Eunice kept house at John Knapp's, eighteen months in all, while Thomas was in the service.

On the day of rejoicing over the news of the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, some of the deponents remember seeing Thomas, with his regiment, on the public green in Fairfield. And Eunice was awaiting her young English lover husband at Fairfield when he was finally discharged from the army, at the cessation of hostilities in August, 1783.

We are told by one of the deponents, Rhoda Parrot (sister of John Knapp, in whose house Eunice and Thomas lived), that she was well acquainted with Thomas and Eunice, both before and after they were married, and that the young husband and wife were seen together at "meeting," which shows that they were still the object of curiosity and comment, as something out of the regular order, in the prosaic, Puritanical life of old New England. Eunice's people were devout Baptists, and she remained one till the day of her death.

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From this time on there is a gap in the history of the life of Thomas and Eunice Solley, until we find them an established family in the North Parish of old Fairfield. About 1797, this part of the town was set off by itself, and called Weston, on the first records of which Thomas and Eunice, together with three children, John, Elizabeth, and Polly, are set down among the founders of the town.

The records of the births and deaths of their children are very meagre. There is no record of any children being born after their marriage, for over five years. Then comes John; then after six years, Elizabeth; then after three years, Polly; and after three years more, Thomas. In 1818, when Thomas Solley was seeking a pension for military service, he refers to only three daughters, Eunice aged twelve, Mercy Ann aged ten, Julia aged eight. No mention is made of John, Elizabeth, Polly, Thomas, Henry, or Sally Solley. Whether this is just the common inaccuracy found in almost all families and records of those rough days, or whether Thomas intentionally gave the ages of only his three youngest children when he applied for a pension, we do not know. His son Thomas second was then eighteen years old, and his daughter Polly twenty-one. This leaves a gap of six years between the birth of Thomas and the next child, Eunice, who was born in 1806. My grandfather, Thomas second, always spoke with great feeling of those years of his childhood, always declaring that his father had a large family, and that many of the children died in infancy. This is the only way which we can account for the gaps in the records.

The known children of Thomas and Eunice Solley are as follows:

John Solley, born April 26, 1788.
Elizabeth Solley, born June 21, 1794.
Polly Solley, born August 15, 1797.
Thomas Solley, born April 16, 1800.
Henry Solley, born —
Sally Solley, born —
Eunice Solley, born 1808.
Mercy Ann Solley, born April 5, 1810.
Julia Solley, born 1812.

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The history of the family for the next period is one of sickness and poverty. We are again indebted to the Revolutionary War pension records for a list of the property, a description of Thomas and Eunice, and the story of their sickness and distress.

The home was located at a place called "Nicksole," at Weston, where Thomas owned seven and one-half acres of land, one house and barn, together with a one-tenth interest in a sawmill. He owned a horse and cart, one cow, and five hens. The whole valuation of his property was set down at \$177.46. While this would be estimated at a much higher value today, probably from \$500.00 to \$700.00, it shows that he was very poor. Thomas's occupation is given as a basket maker, but "he was able to work at this trade only part of the time on account of ill health."

We are also indebted to the pension papers for the only description or likeness of Thomas Solley which we have. There in 1818, he is described as a man "five feet and six inches in height, with dark complexion, dark eyes, and light hair." There he is also recorded as a "farmer." The only other things which we can know about him, as there is no photograph of him, and none of his descendants have retained a description of him, is from inferences. While his son Thomas and several of the daughters were large, well-built, rosy English-looking people, his grandson, George T., and his great-grandson, John B. Solley, Jr., are rather short, and of slight build. George T. Solley more nearly answers the description of Thomas first, than any other person.

The descendants of Thomas seem to have partaken of the English type, which must have preceded him. Nothing more sturdy, virile and healthy than his son, Thomas second, could be imagined. His sisters looked like him. The inference is that Eunice Duffee was not a large woman. In spite of the record of illness and misery, a tremendous amount of vitality was handed on from somewhere. It must have come from England, and represents the forbears of Thomas first.

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In the year 1799 occurred the sickness which completely broke down the health of Thomas Solley. And here we have his own words: "I had a severe fit of sickness in the middle of March, 1799, which miserably broke my constitution. Since that time I have been in a declining state of health, and for years past my eyesight has in a considerable degree failed me." He was then forty years old.

When Thomas applies for a pension in 1818, he also gives a description of his wife, Eunice. "I have a wife, named Eunice, who has been subject to fits for thirty years, and for three years past has been confined to her bed nearly one-half of the time. But at present she is some better." Dating back thirty years from the year 1818, when Thomas sends this description of his wife to Washington, we find that it reaches about the year 1788, when she began to be sickly. Eunice was at that time only twenty-one years old. This sad infirmity may account for the tradition held later on by some of her descendants that "Eunice was not bright."

Dr. Gabriel Baldwin, of Weston, also in 1818, states that "he had been their family physician for many years past, and that Thomas has been able to do very little labor, and his wife very sickly and unable to do but little towards the assistance and management of the family." The combined and continued ill health of both Eunice and Thomas for so many years brought the family into a sad state of poverty. Eunice being a member of the Baptist church, we find that the family was helped by that church many times.

Another thing which shows the great depth of poverty to which the family had sunken in those hard days, brought out to us from the archives at Washington, after having lain a secret for almost one hundred years, is the fact that subscription papers were twice circulated for their benefit.

The first paper is dated May 16, 1808, and states that Thomas had had a "grate sickness," had lost one child (does not give name), that his wife was in a "low state of health," and that Thomas had "lost his mare last week." This paper

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is signed by Thomas Solley himself, and was probably circulated by him. Thomas second was then only eight years of age.

The second paper is dated May 13, 1813, and states that Thomas had lost his cow, that the family had suffered much from sickness during the last winter, the expense of which he had been unable to meet, and that he himself was incapacitated for work because of a very sore hand. Thomas second was then thirteen years old, and may have been away from home at that time. This paper was probably circulated by friends.

We are told that the names signed to the subscription papers were of people "among the most respectable in the towns of Weston and Fairfield," which points to the regard people had for the family. The family during the years of Thomas second's childhood must have been at its deepest state of distress, which will account for the sad memories of this period, the only ones he seems to have retained, and which sank so deeply into his consciousness.

In the month of March, 1818, Thomas Solley applied for a pension for his two years and seven months of service in the Continental army.

Why he should have waited so long—nineteen years after the great illness, which largely incapacitated him for work—before he applied for a pension, we cannot say. It may have been on account of pride and sensitiveness over his poverty, or it may have been that no act of Congress had been passed which would enable him to secure one. After the act which Congress passed for the relief of Revolutionary War veterans, on March 18, 1818, he immediately applied for a pension. He was then fifty-nine years of age.

He secured a pension that same month, but from the papers we see that some difficulty appeared, and his name was then removed from the list. Probably he had not filled all the requirements.

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Again on June 13, 1820, he makes deposition for a pension, and sends to the pension officers at Washington, D. C., a statement of his property, of his physical condition, and of his poverty. Everyone seems to have acted towards him with the greatest kindness, and the pension, which he easily secured, amounted to ninety-six dollars a year.

There now comes a long period, in which we find few connecting links in the history of the Solley family. Of the first two children, John Solley, born April 26, 1788, and Elizabeth, born June 21, 1794, we know nothing. They probably did not live to grow up.

There is a complete silence as to the marriage and setting out in life of both Polly and Thomas, the next two children. The first migration from the family nest was made by Polly, who married well. Her life had probably been connected with her aunt, Polly Fanton, who lived at Redding Ridge, as she was named after her. Here she met Russel Morgan, whose family was one of the original settlers there, and he became her husband. Russel and Polly removed to Bridgeport.

Thomas moved also in the same direction. His life turned towards his aunt Polly, who lived at Redding Ridge, for we find him as a boy going to live at Wolfpits, a little settlement just beyond Redding Ridge, where he was apprenticed to one Eleazer Taylor, to make fur hats. Here he learned the trade which he followed for the remainder of his life. Attaining his majority, he pushed further out into the country, to Kettle-town, where he went into business for himself. This place, just above the Housatonic River, with its fine water privileges, afforded him good facilities for making fur hats, in the old-fashioned way, by hand. About this time, he married Melinda Landers, by whom he had one son, George T. Solley.

Sally, Julia, and Mercy Ann Solley centered their young lives for a time about the rugged character of their brother Thomas; than whom no stronger individualist ever lived. Julia married one Ransom Hinman, Sally married David Harris,

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both of whom were engaged in the same business with Thomas, at Kettletown, as also were the Landers family, into which Thomas married. Mercy Ann Solley married Aaron Davis, and moved still farther out into the town of Southbury and Sandy Hook.

While I was visiting the scenes of this family in 1897, Frederick Gray spoke of these sisters as the "Solley girls." He remembered them distinctly, as well as their brother, the rugged Thomas second, whom once to see was never to forget; and he also distinctly remembered the decrepit Revolutionary pensioner who lived with his son Thomas at Kettletown.

Of Thomas and Eunice's son Henry, we have only this story, that he went away to sea and settled in foreign parts. A son of his is said to have once come back and hunted up his relatives, but he was lost to sight, and I have been unable to find anyone who remembered him.

Of Eunice's daughter and namesake, the second Eunice Solley, who was born in 1808, we have been unable to learn anything, except that when Thomas applied for a pension in 1820, Eunice second was twelve years old. We never have found that she grew to womanhood.

Whether or not both Thomas and Eunice went to live in their infirmity and old age with their rugged son Thomas, there is no one now alive who can tell us. We only know that the father lived with him.

The whole life at Kettletown seems to have centered around the virile, vigorous, and humorous Thomas second. The life was primitive, and harsh to an extreme. Even now, after almost a hundred years, the region is a rough and impossible one. A man who worked at hats in those days had the name of being both rough and wild. "As mad as a hatter" was a proverbial phrase.

But there were some finer elements in the life at Kettletown, for the spirited Methodist movements of those days entered the region and made a great impression upon its inhabitants. A line of meeting houses was built about that time

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from the shore of Long Island Sound, northward, and far into the country. The Solleys seem to have been greatly affected by this movement, and Thomas second was drawn into it. Whether this affected the elder Thomas or not, we do not know, but as it influenced the Davises and the Hinmans, we are inclined to think that the whole family was swept into its vigorous current. We know that some of the family attended the Methodist church at Zoar Bridge, and later they attended the rough new meeting house which was built upon the top of George's Hill. Here Thomas second became a Class Leader, a position of some distinction after the old Methodistic order.—See History of South Britain, page 133.

It is only due to this religious movement of the early Methodists to say that its influence upon the life of the rugged Thomas second made the deepest of impressions, which lasted him throughout his whole life. I once heard him say, "all I am, grace has made me." Until the day of his death, he was the most constant church attendant, and connected with all its activities. His type of piety was of the most old-fashioned Methodistic kind.

Thomas Solley first lived a quiet, inoffensive life during those last years, with his son, at Kettletown, broken in health and spirit. He had suffered many years. "All of life's billows had rolled over him." He finally died of the old-fashioned disease called "gravel," which he claimed to have contracted during the rough days of Continental army life. He had been a sufferer for thirty years.

He is said to have been telling a Revolutionary War story when he was suddenly taken with pain, and the end came. He was buried in the newly-made graveyard, back of the crude, new meeting house of the new settlement, on the top of George's Hill. He had lived his life in the valley of humiliation. Now, all that was mortal of him was carried to the mountain top, and laid forever at rest in the crown of those everlasting hills.

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Thomas Solley died June 1, 1829. This, according to the Weston town records, which state that he was born August 14, 1759, makes him a month and fourteen days less than seventy years of age. On his plain, white marble tombstone at George's Hill, he is said to have been "aged 71 years," when he passed on. This is probably only the common inaccuracy of those crude days. It may have come from the change in reckoning the time. Five years after the death of his father, Thomas second placed the body of his young wife, Melinda Landers, beside that of his father in the little graveyard at George's Hill, where their stones can now be seen standing closely side by side. She had been a good wife and mother, and had tenderly cared for the old soldier. "In death they *were* not divided."

Not long after this, Thomas moved his business to more favorable quarters in the pretty village of South Britain, Connecticut. The other members of that little company who had settled in that rough and impossible region, with so much vigor and hope, left, one by one. The Hinmans moved to Bethel, the Harrises moved to Morrow County, Ohio, the Davises to Sandy Hook. Finally the place became the deserted region which it is today. The meeting house at George's Hill, never large, although it sheltered stout hearts, was taken down, and the society united with the one at South Britain. The rough farms became deserted.

The little graveyard in time grew up to bushes and trees, and was finally forgotten, as though to cover the secrets which had gone into the grave of that lonely, despondent Revolutionary soldier who lay buried there. The grave of Thomas Solley remained forgotten and unknown for over fifty years, until it was discovered by his great-grandson, George Willis Solley, in the summer of 1903.

Thomas and Eunice had lived together, husband and wife, for forty-seven years. The next we know about Eunice is that she is spending her last days most comfortably with

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her handsome daughter, Polly Solley Morgan, at Bridgeport, Connecticut.

There she lived the life of a quiet invalid for ten years and six months after her husband, Thomas, died. She was decrepit, and had bronchitis, then called "old folks' consumption," which kept her in her room most of the time, but she was lovingly cared for in the bosom of this hearty, rugged New England family, where her capable, jolly daughter, Polly, made life a blessing to her. A big family of grandchildren was growing up about her, two of whom remained in after years to tell me, in 1909, how they used to go to her room as children to tell grandma stories.

It was a happy home although a primitive and rugged one. One of the little daughters was named after Grandmother Eunice, to whom she gave each year a birthday gift of a silver dollar, in honor of her name. This was a great gift for a child in those days, when in common families money was almost unknown, the chief thing in life seeming to be to find how well they could get on without it in the struggle for existence.

Eunice did not receive any widow's pension until seven years after the death of her husband. This may be because no act of Congress had been passed which would entitle her to receive one. An act which included her case was passed by Congress July 4, 1831, but we do not find that she made any effort to secure a pension until October 4, 1836. She was then sixty-nine years old.

In her first declaration Eunice's infirmity is clearly shown, as she makes several inaccuracies, both as to dates of her birth and her marriage to Thomas, as well as about Thomas's service in the army and the date of his death. She must have been very infirm at that time, although only sixty-nine years of age, for Mark Moore, Judge of Probate at Bridgeport, certifies at the end of her declaration that "she cannot now write, but made her mark." Neither did she state her husband's rank in the army; probably she had forgotten it.

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The people's minds were occupied with other things in those days. Rearing large families, getting a living, and starting their sons and daughters out in life were the main things, and fully occupied their attention and time.

Neither were old people looked upon then as they are now. Old people were just "old folks." Life was hard, and everybody worked to the limit of his strength. If any were so fortunate as to have lived their three-score years and ten, they were allowed to sit idle, and were supposed to be "worn out." And as for dates people largely reckoned the years by events. There were few books, and fewer records, and we find many inaccuracies in dates of those days from the "cradle to the grave."

At the time of her first application for a pension Eunice sent beside her own declaration statements from Anna Peet and Olive Treadwell, who had been guests at her wedding; one from John Knapp, in whose house Thomas had first hired rooms for her to keep house in; one from her sister, Polly Duffee Fanton; and one from her son-in-law, Russel Morgan.

These papers were sent to Washington to the pension office in the War Department, but they seem to have been inadequate to secure a pension for her. Eunice had no certificate of her marriage, neither had she kept clearly in her mind the important dates of Thomas's service. In her own declaration she stated "that she has not made any effort to prove his service, as she supposes his services have already been sufficiently proven to enable her to secure a full pension, and refers to that proof in the war office."

Her husband had been dead six years, and life was settling itself quietly for her own passing out. It seemed somewhat difficult to arouse her to the past. In November, 1836, another effort was made to secure a pension for Thomas's widow. Isaac Sherman, Esq., of Bridgeport, sent on a large number of papers which contained a much longer and clearer statement from Eunice about her marriage, as well as the service of Thomas in the Continental army.

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About this time a statement from the clerk of the church whose former minister married Thomas and Eunice was sent to the pension office at Washington. In this statement we are told that Rev. Robert Ross, who married them, "never recorded any marriages" during his long ministry at Stratford (probably Stratfield church).

The second application papers also contained declarations from more old Stratford neighbors, and girlhood friends of Eunice, who, wonderful to relate, were still alive. Papers from Squire Parrot and Rhoda Parrot, from Seth and Daniel Hall, the latter of whom was married about the time that Eunice was; from Squire Odell, who was brother of Eunice's old lover, Nehemiah, and also one from Hezia Sherwood, who states in her seventy-ninth year that she had been a guest at the wedding of Thomas and Eunice.

These additional papers were sent on to Washington. But the widow was to have further trouble. The war office still required further proofs of her marriage, and asked to have the discrepancy as to dates and ages rectified.

On December 16, 1836, Isaac Sherman sent on a third declaration from Eunice about her age, and the dates required, together with the testimony of the court of Bridgeport that the evidence sent is satisfactory to it. Polly and her son, Edmond Fanton, again made statements, and these together with one from Hezia Sherwood, who was another wedding guest, seem at last to have satisfied the pension officers at Washington. A full pension was then granted to the widow of Thomas Solley of one hundred dollars per annum, to commence on the fourth day of March, 1831. Her certificate of pension was issued on the twenty-fifth day of March, 1837, and sent to Hon. G. Tomlinson.

Eunice Solley's long waiting for her rights, as well as the pains taken to secure them, were now amply rewarded, for the judgment of the pension officers at Washington gave her six years' back pay, together with one semi-annual allowance, which amounted in all to six hundred and fifty dollars. That was a neat sum for those days.

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The three sets of application papers made to secure a pension for Thomas Solley's widow, which lay so long unknown in the archives at Washington, present some wonderful things. The most noticeable is that so many intimate friends and neighbors should have been alive after so many years, who had "known Eunice from a child." Nearly all of the deponents speak of Thomas as though the young lover had made a great impression in his day. Nearly all mention the fact of seeing him "with his regimentals on." All make note of Eunice's youth at the time of her marriage. The entire papers show, after fifty years, the curiosity with which the stout Connecticut patriots, whose thoughts were occupied with war, were taken with a romance of a soldier; and one even remembers seeing the young couple together "at meeting" after they were married; which gives a pious touch to it all.

Eunice Solley died in Bridgeport, at the home of Russel and Polly Morgan, on December 31, 1840. Calculating from the date of her birth, which is entered in the Weston town records as December 25, 1767, this would make her seventy-three years and six days of age.

It was mid-winter in our "wild New England." We are told that the roads were impassable, and we know that the settlement at George's Hill had been largely deserted. For these reasons the family decided not to have her body placed beside that of the Revolutionary soldier. So Eunice was buried in what was then known as the old Division Street burying-ground at Bridgeport. Here her ashes rested for many years, until the growing city encroached upon the quiet spot. They were then moved to the new and beautiful Mountain Grove cemetery, where they were buried in the Russel Morgan lot, and where today you may see her plain white marble stone at the beginning of a row of Morgan graves. The old Division Street burying-ground was completely built over, and is now known only as Park Avenue and Cottage Street.

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Of late years great interest has been aroused in everything pertaining to the Revolutionary War. Edward J. Morgan, great-grandson of Eunice and Thomas Solley, began to take the greatest interest in his Revolutionary ancestor and became a devoted Son of the American Revolution. This he secured through Thomas Solley's record.

Not long ago the Daughters of the American Revolution placed a flag upon Eunice's grave, which they also decorate annually in honor of her young soldier lover, Thomas Solley.

CHAPTER IX.

A ROMANCE AND A TRAGEDY.

IN the previous chapter I have endeavored to keep as strictly as possible to the bare facts in the lives of our ancestors, Thomas and Eunice Solley. But I find that after the most careful sifting of material, and the selection of things which seem to be creditable testimony, there is still such an amount of picturesque material which will not be set aside, nor downed, that I am constrained to take up my pen anew.

I cannot say that the chapter which I am now to write is anything more than a fabrication out of the questions and fancies concerning our ancestors which have come to me during the past forty years. I shall call it "A Romance and a Tragedy."

The romance is this. Thomas Solley, a young man of some education, as his handwriting shows at the age of fifty-nine, even after an illness of thirty years, was just about to attain his majority. He was looking forward to all that was brightest and best in life, and like every other healthy, sturdy young Englishman of his day, he was looking forward to being married to the maid of his choice. Suddenly, without warning, he was swept by the royal press gang from the gladness of his rosy-hued world into the stiff discipline and harsh life of the English military service. Almost before he realized the truth of the situation he was rolling on the waves of old ocean in a huge, old-fashioned sailing ship of the navy of King George III.

The journey was a rough one, and the ship was some months in reaching the new country, which was then in open

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rebellion and at war against the mother country. Then came the landing, the hostile conditions, the strange faces, the rough, new life of a soldier, the harsh, changeful climate, together with privation, want, and discouragement. He had no interest in fighting for King George.

But the dark picture does not stop here. What hope was there of ever returning to the mother country and the family fireside? His Majesty's forces were getting the worst of it; Burgoyne had surrendered and the British had been driven out of Maryland. What chance of ever seeing the fair face of her whom he loved most of all, and who was the star of all his earthly hopes? How far apart they seemed! Three thousand miles of a tempestuous ocean which he had never before seen rolled between them. His past life faded and left him stranded among the realities of the harsh, primitive conditions of a rebellious and an unwelcoming land. Despair settled over him. Then he lost his head.

One day when hope of ever seeing the mother country, home, and friends again had deserted him for a time, a fresh, fair face crossed his path in this land which had become darkness to him, and suddenly awakened him from his dream of despair. Could it be possible? Was it she?

Thomas Solley has not been the only one whom a fair face has awakened out of a dream of despair. Neither has he been the only one who in his awakening did things which afterwards could not be undone, and which changed the whole course of his life. Having once seen a face which was like the one he had left behind, nothing could keep him from seeing it again. He found out where the maiden lived. The next step was to be near that face all the time. The next was desertion from the royal service; the next was going to live in a town adjacent to her home. Then Thomas had time to think.

Having escaped with his life from the British service, having located as a citizen in the new land, he seriously considered what would be the next step in accomplishing the end

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which he had in view. Eunice Duffee's people were Colonial patriots of the deepest dye. Her father was enlisted in the Colonial service and was away from home. Thomas could not remain a stranger without employment in this land of patriots without arousing suspicion. He must do something quickly and strikingly, both to ally himself with the patriots, and also to set him right with the family of Eunice Duffee. Within a year after deserting the British forces he joined the Continental service, and set out to earn a reputation in this new land. He became an ardent patriot and a good soldier, and soon was promoted to the rank of sergeant.

Providence, or was it the keen calculation of the young lover, brought him into company with enlisted men from old Stratford, Connecticut; and not only this, but he chose for his chum Nehemiah Odell, a young man from that place, and—*the lover of Eunice Duffee!*

Ingratiating himself with young Odell he was invited home by him to old Stratford. The Odells and the Duffees were near neighbors and warm friends, and there he met, without reserve, the bright face which had awakened him from his dream of despair. Then it was the old story over again which is ever being repeated in human life,

As in water face answereth to face,
So the heart of man to man.

Through the ardent wooing of young Thomas, Nehemiah Odell was set aside. A hasty marriage was arranged for, even though Thomas was in active army service, and Eunice not quite fifteen years of age.

The soldier lover cared faithfully for his youthful bride, whom he now saw frequently, and the new life in the new world became almost as roseate as the old life in the old world from which he had been severed, and which he had left behind forever.

But however roseate this new life opened, shadows soon settled down upon it which were to remain for many years. Not long after this, Lord Cornwallis surrendered, and the war

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of the American Revolution was over. Then Thomas had time to think. It was now impossible for him to return to his native land. His hasty deed in his hour of despair had cut him off forever from his native land, his family, and his old friends, as it had also severed him from the lover of his youth. There was only one course open before him. The tragedy of his life then settled down upon him and submerged the romance of it.

The whole picture of Thomas Solley after this is of a man who was not in his right environment. He was cut off from the occupation and tastes for which he was suited, and he found himself unable to cope with the conditions of this rugged new country and its trying climate. The extremely fine feeling and sensitiveness with which many of his descendants have been marked points back to an ancestor who was at least no common rough laborer. Without doubt his isolation from his own land and people, together with the harsh conditions of this new country, brought on the poor health which he suffered for so many years; and also produced in him the morbid characteristics with which he marked his descendants.

If Thomas ever had any connection with the mother country or his own people after this, we do not know of them. According to the custom of those times, he would be looked upon by his family in England as a traitor and an outlaw, and if he came from a well-to-do or high-class family, the feeling against him would be all the stronger. So he resigned himself to his fate.

Thomas Solley came to regard his condition as one of reproach, and all of his descendants seem to have looked upon it likewise. He has always been spoken of with mystery, and looked upon as one on whom some great blight rested. The descendants of Thomas and Eunice have always spoken of them with reticence, as though there was something which should not be revealed. And furthermore, all the Solleys down the line have been exceedingly reticent about their affections, their family affairs, and their business matters.

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While they have nearly all lived within the small radius where Thomas and Eunice lived, very few of their descendants have had any relations with one another, and many of them have never even known that the others existed. Often members of the same family could not tell where their own brothers and sisters or their descendants were living. And all these conditions have prevailed without any personal dislike of one towards another.

Whether or not Thomas's life with Eunice was a happy one, we do not know; many things show that it was not. Marrying a girl in a fit of despair rarely ever brings lasting consolation; and marrying a girl simply because she looks like someone from whom one has been separated usually proves but a romance from which the actors are soon roughly awakened. Whether or not Thomas's morbid despair drew his wife down with him we do not know. But we do know that she never lifted him out of it.

The brightest thing in all the history of these two young lovers is that, in spite of all their misery, they marked their descendants with the most passionate characteristics of affection and of family love.

After studying most carefully for years every fact and tradition, fear and fancy, pertaining to Thomas and Eunice Solley, I have never found anything of a criminal nature, or been able to place my finger upon any moral blot or stain. They seem to have been a couple whom disappointment and hard conditions submerged. That turned their lives into a tragedy.

To Thomas the tragedy of life was the rough act which robbed him of his home, his position in society, and the comforts and joys of his native land, the fate of which was then forever sealed by his own rash acts of morbid despair, by his desertion from the British service, and by his marriage to Eunice Duffee.

The tragedy to Eunice was the disappointment in her young soldier lover, whose sensitive nature failed to cope

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with the rugged conditions of the new climate and a strange civilization. The loss of her health brought the shadows early into her home. In death they were divided.

Disappointment and morbid fear in both the young lovers brought on the ill health from which they both suffered for so many years. Thomas was ill even while in military service; and his "greate sickness" was in 1799, when he was only forty years of age. From that time he had no more good health. Eunice's illness and decline in health began when she was only twenty-two years of age, and continued through the rest of her mortal life.

But as every cloud has its silver lining, so it is even with this old story of love's tragedy. Thomas and Eunice marked their descendants also with other characteristics which constitute the choicest legacy of any life, and which become always the foundation principles for all true homes and of all human progress.

CHAPTER X.

SOME FAMILY CHARACTER SKETCHES.

POLLY SOLLEY'S LINE.

POLLY Solley was the third recorded child of Thomas and Eunice Solley, and their first daughter. She was evidently the "flower of the family," being, like her brother Thomas, who came three years later, of large build, good height, florid complexion, and of a stirring, hearty, jovial nature. Russell Plumb Morgan says of his mother, Polly, "She had a very pleasant disposition, laughed a good deal, and laughed all over. Her laugh was contagious." This evidently points back to Solley ancestry in old England.

We have no knowledge of her early life, and little about the childhood of any of Thomas and Eunice's children. Polly's life must have centered about that of her aunt, Polly Fanton, as the first thing we really know of her she was being wooed by young Russel Morgan of Wolfpits, the district adjoining Redding Ridge, where Polly Fanton lived.

Russel Morgan was a stout, virile youth, who learned the carpenter's trade at Redding, where he probably first met Polly Solley. His father, Caleb Morgan, objected to Russel's getting married, because he was learning his trade and because he was not of age, but finally Russel married Polly against his father's wishes, and soon after moved to Bridgeport. Caleb Morgan would not let them stay at the old home. He did not object to Polly, but he wanted them to wait, and so father and son became estranged.

Russel used to say that the first dollar he ever had he earned by growing and selling a bushel of beans.

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So the young couple came down to Bridgeport, at that time not much of a place, and the mill at North Bridgeport, then called "Pequonnock," needing carpenters, Russel engaged to work for the Bunnells, who were the mill owners.

Russel built many of the best houses in that vicinity, some of which are now in good condition. Upon the bank near the quaint old stone Church of the Nativity, you may still see a row of ancient tenement houses. These houses were originally where the pond is situated, but the dam broke away, the houses were damaged, and they floated down near where they now are. A new dam was built farther south, and the houses were moved up to the top of the bank.

We believe that Russel Morgan and Polly lived in one of these houses at first, before they were damaged and moved—at any rate they lived there for a considerable time. Russel built a house for himself, with a grocery store connected with it, opposite the Bunnells' mill. Later he removed to Bridgeport Main Street, a mile below, where he built another house and store near North Avenue.

In this store Russel Morgan kept shoes, dry goods, groceries, and cider brandy. At times his children tended store for him while he went out and did carpentering. He took his pay for work or for groceries in orders upon the company or business firm of that section. The period was that of the country's worst financial condition. There was almost no money, and notes were in constant circulation. If anyone wanted money or anything else they gave an interest-bearing note to get it.

Russell Plumb was seventeen years old when his parents moved into the house on Main Street. In this house, now standing, Eunice Duffee Solley last lived, and died.

Russel and Polly had eleven children, six boys and five girls, the same number as Mercy Ann and Aaron Davis; and there is also a similarity of given names: Zillah, William, Sarah, Eunice, Thomas, George, Mary, Russell Plumb, Laura, Daniel, and David.

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Of these children, Zillah was a great beauty and was called "the village belle." She married one of the Bunnells connected with the mill at North Bridgeport.

Sarah, who was said to be like her mother, Polly, was a large, fine-looking woman, weighing probably one hundred and eighty pounds. She had large grey eyes, black hair, and florid complexion. She also had a strong voice, was a good story-teller, and much given to laughter. Polly used to say "she was glad all her girls were good-looking."

Three of Polly's daughters lived to good old age: Zillah Peck lived to be eighty-four, Sarah Hayes eighty-six, and Eunice Booth (who died January 18, 1910) lived to the age of eighty-six.

Russell Plumb Morgan was the last survivor of Polly's children. He died March 27, 1911. He recollected that his grandmother, Eunice Solley, was an invalid, confined to her room for perhaps ten years. He could not recollect Eunice, or Russel, or Polly, ever going to any church, but all the children had to walk down to Bridgeport to St. John's Episcopal church, (which used to stand on the corner of Cannon and Broad Streets, where the postoffice now is,) every Sunday, about two miles, and when they got home they had to change their good clothes for the everyday ones, being particularly careful of the shoes. The boys went barefoot in summer.

Russel Morgan spelled his name with one *l*, was of good height, weighed one hundred and ninety-four pounds, and he had good teeth even when he died. He suffered with bladder trouble called gravel, and when he died had wasted away to about seventy-five pounds. He had a gruff voice and manner, but was a good, kind father, a just man, a hard worker, and had no use for idle people, either rich or poor.

Russell Plumb told the following story concerning the husband of his sister Zillah, Darius Edwin Bunnell.

Darius had an uncle, Jairus Bunnell, a sea captain who made frequent trips to the tropics, and often visited at North Bridgeport. He brought at one time from the West Indies

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three young parrots that he found in a nest. He presented one to a friend in New Haven, another to the factory store, and the third to the bride, Zillah, as a wedding gift. The boys in the mill taught theirs to swear, and it became so very expert in the art that it had to be disposed of.

Zillah had a hard time; her husband lost his mind, and they had to return to her father's to live. She brought the parrot, of course, and this parrot for many years was one of the familiar sights of the neighborhood. Everybody knew Polly Parrot.

Polly Solley Morgan thought a great deal of this parrot. She would leave the cage door open, and Poll would go all over the neighborhood. But it usually came home to sleep, although at one time it was lost for four days. Polly trained the parrot so that it would call the boys to breakfast. It would call up the stairs, "Get up, Plumb"; "Get up, Tom"; "Get up, George"; "Time to get up!"

The parrot lived to be eighteen years old. One Sunday in early spring it took cold and died.

Polly Solley Morgan died after a short illness, aged only sixty-one years and four months. No one seems to recollect the nature of her illness.

Russell Plumb Morgan.

Russell Plumb Morgan, the eighth child of Russel and Polly, was born at Bridgeport. He lived there ever afterward, except while he was away during the Civil War, and during a short period when he moved his family to New Haven.

"Plumb," as he was often called, followed the trade of a close plater, making a specialty of coach and harness hardware, covered with the actual sheet of gold or silver soldered on to the commoner metals. He was associated for many years with the White Manufacturing Company of Bridgeport.

The war of the Rebellion caused him to sever his good business connections, and enlist in the service of the Northern



Russell Plumb Morgan.



Eleanor Sophia Lewis.

THE YOUNG LOVERS.



MR. AND MRS. EDWARD J. MORGAN.
EDWARD, AGED 10 AND 15.

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army. After sleeping in the swamps of Virginia, and enduring many privations, his health gave out and he was brought home an invalid. He never fully recovered from the strain of the war.

Russell Plumb Morgan married Eleanor Sophia Lewis of Bridgeport, who came of Welsh parentage. They had four children, Florence, Helena, Edward, and Lewis.

John and Mary Lewis, with two children, came direct from Welchpool in Wales, John to take a situation as master spinner in the Bunnell mill at North Bridgeport. He worked in that mill for thirty-five years. John and Mary had two more children born to them after they emigrated to North Bridgeport. One of these, Eleanor Sophia, became the wife of Russell Plumb Morgan, and mother of Edward J. Morgan.

The two families of Morgan and Lewis lived in the same row of mill houses, the remains of which can still be seen, the children growing up together like one family. Plumb and Eleanor had never been separated until he went away to the Civil War.

During the thirty-five years of John Lewis's service at the Bunnell mill the company failed in business five times, and just seven years apart in dates, but the company kept re-organizing. Lewis earned only a dollar and a half per day, but he brought up a family of four children, and when he died he left a fortune of ten thousand dollars, which was a wonderful performance for a laborer, even for those hard times.

Edward Jucket Morgan.

The name "Morgan," like the name of "Sterling," stands for excellence. The Morgans of Bethel and Bridgeport, Connecticut, have been for six generations engaged in farming, building, and manufacturing industries.

Edward Jucket Morgan was born at New Haven, Connecticut, August 4, 1859, being the eldest son of Russell Plumb Morgan and Eleanor Sophia Lewis; grandson of Russel Morgan and Polly Solley; great-grandson of Caleb Morgan and

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Sarah Drew of Morgan Heights, Wolfpits district, Bethel; and great-great-grandson of Abijah Morgan of Gregory's Orchard, Redding Ridge, Connecticut, and one of the first settlers in that region.

Edward was named for his uncle, Edward C. Lewis, of Waterbury, Connecticut; and the second name, Jucket, for a good friend and neighbor at New Haven, Connecticut, one Edmund B. Jucket, who later removed to Providence, Rhode Island, where his daughters, Miss Emma M. Jucket and Mrs. Nellie B. Jucket Jackson, still live.

Abijah Morgan of Redding Ridge was a successful farmer, whose home was at the foot of Morgan Heights, where the road branches off to Putnam Park.

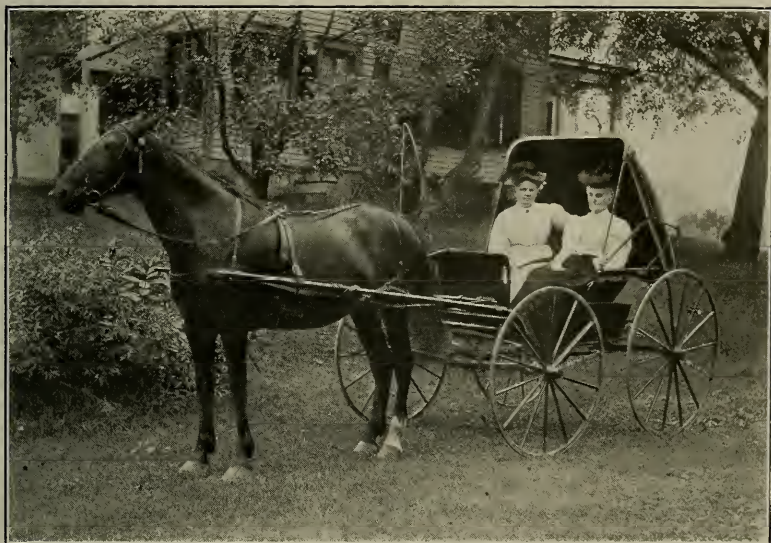
His son, Caleb, built the old homestead on the highest point of land in that vicinity, where some of his descendants still live. Caleb was a farmer and a butcher.

On Labor Day, 1908, Edward J. Morgan set out to find the place of the first Morgan settlers in Connecticut, his aim being to establish his credentials for joining the Sons of the American Revolution. Although many deeds and records of the Morgan family had been preserved from the days of the Revolutionary War, he had found it impossible to establish his descent from a Revolutionary soldier.

His hunt for an ancestor almost parallels that of the writer. Both knew, in a vague way, that an ancestor named Thomas Solley had been a soldier in Washington's army. But the "Genealogy of the Morgan Family" gave him no clew to the finding of Thomas Solley.

On Labor Day, 1908, he visited the Morgan homestead at Morgan Heights for the first time, and found the two very intelligent ladies, Miss Laura Fairchild and Flora Drew Morgan, who now live at the old Caleb Morgan place.

The rejoicing was mutual over this coming together of direct descendants of the first Abijah Morgan, and the visit was followed by many delightful returns to the beautiful spot. The view from the Morgan homestead is one of the



CALEB MORGAN PLACE, WOLFPITS.
FLORA D. AND LAURA F. MORGAN.

HIS DESCENDANTS

finest in the state of Connecticut, and several prominent families from New York city have recently bought up most of the surrounding country, and built magnificent residences there.

Through the "Morgan girls," Edward was referred to David Treat Solley of Bethel as a descendant of the Revolutionary War soldier with whom the Morgan family was connected. From that he was put in communication with his son, Reverend George W. Solley of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, who had already started out on his "hunt for an ancestor," and had found Thomas Solley.

The copies of the two following deeds relating to the Morgan property holdings at Wolfpits will be of interest to Polly Solley's descendants. Bethel was then a part of the town of Danbury, which was bounded on the south by Redding.

To all People to Whom These Presents Shall Come: GREETING.

Know ye that I John Bennett of Brookfield in Fairfield County and State of Connecticut, for the consideration of Seventy Pounds lawful money, received to my full satisfaction of Abijah Morgin of the town of Reading in said County.

Do give grant, bargain sell and confirm unto him the said Abijah Morgin, his heirs and assigns, one certain piece of land containing one hundred acres, be the same more or less, lying in the township of Sandgate and County Bennington and State of Vermont, said land lying joining the east side of a fifty acre piece laid out to Matthew Rice, beginning on said line, at a tree marked and stones to it, then east 30 degrees, south 40 rods to a tree marked stones by it, thence south 10 degrees, west 20 rods to a tree marked and stones to it thence east 10 degrees, south 68 rods thence north 10 degrees east 80 rods thence west 10 degrees, north 10 rods to a tree marked stones by it, thence north 10 degrees 54 rods, thence west 10 degrees north 100 rods, thence south 10 degrees 154 rods to the first mentioned bounds. Said land is bounded south by Common Land east on Common Land and David Leavenworth land and Matthew Rice land.

To have and to hold the above granted and bargained premises with the appurtenances thereof unto him the said Abijah Morgin his heirs and assigns forever to his and their own proper use and behoof, and also I the said John Bennett, do for myself my heirs, executors and

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adminstrators covenant with the said Abijah Morgin his heirs and assigns, that at and until the ensealing of these presents, I am well seized of the premises as estate in fee simple and have good right to bargain and sell the same in manner and form as is above written and that the same is free and clear of all incumbrances whatsoever and furthermore, I the said John Bennet do by these presents bind my self and heirs forever to warrant and defend the above granted and bargained premises to him the said Abijah Morgin his heirs and assigns against all claims and demands whatsoever, in witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the 15th day of January Anno-domini 1789.

JOHN BENNETT.

Signed. Sealed. And Delivered in presence of

THOS TAYLOR

PRUHAMAH TAYLOR

Fairfield County on the day and date above written, personally appeared John Bennett signer and sealer of the foregoing instrument and acknowledge the same to be his free act and deed before me.

THOS TAYLOR *Justice of the Peace.*

Received for record February 23 Ad 1790 and recorded in book 2 and page 381.

Abner Ward Register

Abijah Morgan was father of Caleb Morgan, father of Fairchild Morgan, Russel Morgan, etc., grandfather of the Misses Laura and Flora Morgan, grandfather of Russell P. Morgan, great-grandfather of Edward J. Morgan.

Abijah Morgan lived at the foot of the hill, where the road turns to go to Putnam Park. Caleb and others of his children lived on top of the hill, where their descendants still live.

This may be the John Bennett we are looking for, who is possibly a brother of Eunice Solley's mother, Elizabeth Duffee. If so we have established Eunice's mother's family name.

To all People to Whom These Presents Shall Come: GREETING.

Know ye that I Benjamin Mead of Danbury, in Fairfield County, and State of Connecticut, for the consideration of Ninety four dollars, received to my full satisfaction of Caleb Morgan, of said Danbury, do give, grant, bargain and sell and confirm unto the said Caleb Morgan and to his heirs and assigns four acres and eight rods of land lying in said Danbury at the Woolf pits commonly so called, and is bounded



HOME OF EDWARD J. MORGAN, 100 MILL HILL AVE., BRIDGEPORT.
INTERIOR OF LIVING ROOM.

RUSSELL MORGAN HOUSE, NORTH BRIDGEPORT.

OLD BUNNELL MILL COTTAGES, NORTH BRIDGEPORT.

HIS DESCENDANTS

easterly on Abijah Morgan's land and on the said Caleb Morgan land Northerly on Elijah Judd's land, westerly on my other land, southerly on my other land with liberty to pass and repass from the southwest corner of said land to the old reserve.

To have and to hold the above granted and bargained premises with the appurtenances thereof unto him the said Caleb Morgan and to his heirs and assigns forever to his and their own proper use and behoof, and also I the said Benjamin Mead, do for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, covenant with the said Caleb Morgan, his heirs and assigns that at and untill the ensealing of these presents I am well seized of the premises as a good indefeasable estate in fee simple and have good right to bargain and sell the same in manner and form as is above written, and that the same is free of all other incumbrances whatsoever and furthermore I the said Benjamin Mead do by these presents bind myself and my heirs forever to warrant and defend the above granted and bargained premises to him the said Caleb Morgan and to his heirs and assigns against all claims and demands whatsoever, in witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the 15th day of January annodomini 1807.

Signed sealed and delivered in presence of

BENJAMIN MEAD.

RACHEL TAYLOR.

THOS TAYLOR

Fairfield County ss Danbury on the day and date above personally appeared Benjamin Mead signer and sealer of the foregoing instrument and acknowledged the same to be his free act and deed before me.

THOS TAYLOR *Justice of the Peace.*

Recorded Feby 9th 1808 in Danbury Town Records book 13, page 62 by me Joseph M White Register.

This is a copy of one of many deeds of land purchased by Caleb Morgan in the vicinity of his home at Wolfpits.

Caleb Morgan was a son of Abijah Morgan, who lived at the foot of the hill.

The property is now owned by Miss Laura Fairchild Morgan and her sister, Flora Drew Morgan, grandchildren of Caleb.

There was a very old gentleman living in 1909, just above Wolfpits, named Mead, who remembered Caleb Morgan, and he no doubt was a son of the Benjamin Mead that sold the above land to Caleb Morgan.

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Edward J. Morgan attended the public school at North Bridgeport, which had the usual lack of heating, and other discomforts. He carried his lunch, skated, played and fought with his schoolmates until he was ten years old. Then owing to headaches and other disorders, it was thought that a change would be beneficial to him and he was put to work as a cash boy in the dry goods store of Hall & Read. Here he was advanced to the bundle counter, and finally to that of hosiery clerk. He worked from 8 A. M. until 10 P. M. for five dollars per week.

Edward's first public appearance was at a school exhibition when, at the age of seven years, he spoke his first "piece" before the "Committee," parents, and visitors. The "piece" ran something like this:

When this old hat was new,
King George was on his throne.
Our fathers all were rebels then,
And fought for Washington.
The Tories cheered for old King George
The Revolution through,
And bragged about their loyalty
When this old hat was new.

Edward held a very old stove-pipe hat in his hand, and at the end of each verse he hit the hat a whack. The "piece" brought down the house! (The hat may have been made by Thomas second.)

After saving his money, he entered the commercial and military school of Emory F. Strong on Bank Street, where a gymnasium and other innovations had been introduced, the tuition costing him one dollar and a half per week. At the age of seventeen, through the kindness of his uncle, Edward C. Lewis of Waterbury, Connecticut, he secured a situation as an office clerk with the Bridgeport Iron Works, where Mr. Lewis was interested, and where as a young man he had learned his own trade as an iron molder.

Owing to the lack of harmony and efficiency, the works were placed in the hands of a receiver, who sold the property



MACHINE SHOP, FOUNDRY AND OFFICE AT BRIDGEPORT,
· CONTROLLED BY EDWARD J. MORGAN.

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to Mr. Lewis, and he leased it to a number of parties. When he died in 1901, he bequeathed the business to his nephew, Edward Morgan.

After working in various capacities for the tenants and profiting by the experiences of others, Edward became the controlling owner in the foundry and machine shops.

In 1903, owing to the death of his father-in-law, William Lowe, proprietor of The Bridgeport Boiler Works, he became the controlling owner in that business, making three factories under his control, each conducting a different class of mechanical work, employing in all about two hundred men, and doing an extensive business in the States and foreign countries. He holds the office of Vice-President and Treasurer of The Coulter & McKenzie Machine Co., and the Bridgeport Boiler Works Co., reorganizing the companies some years ago. He is also interested in national banks, in real estate, and in Peck & Line's Horse and Carriage Company of Bridgeport.

In politics he is a staunch Republican, and has held the office of city alderman. He holds membership in the leading clubs of the city.

He is especially interested in automobiling, and has spent much of his spare time in traveling about the country with his family, his historical work being done in this way.

In religious work, he and his wife are active members of St. Paul's Episcopal church, where he has served as vestryman, treasurer, and warden.

Edward J. married Emma Ophelia Lowe, a native of Bridgeport, but of English parentage, at Christ church, October 14, 1885. She was graduated from Golden Hill Seminary.

They have two children, Grace Eleanor, who was educated at Ossining School, Ossining, New York, and who married George Channing Miller of Bridgeport; and Edna Lowe, now a student at Mount Ida School, at Newton, Massachusetts.

Edward J. Morgan, to use his own words, "got his education among folks," and prides himself upon being a "self-made man." He believes in cooperation in industries, and has

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always surrounded himself with skilled workmen, to which he attributes much of his success. Several business men of his city owe their advancement to his influence and assistance.

During the spring of 1910, Edward J. Morgan invited a few of the descendants of Thomas and Eunice Solley to be his guests in taking an automobile trip to George's Hill, and the grave of Thomas Solley.

The party met at Bridgeport on May 28, which was almost the eighty-first anniversary of the death of the Revolutionary soldier. They first visited the grave of Eunice Solley and her daughter, Polly Solley, wife of Russel Morgan, at the Russel Morgan family lot in Mountain Grove Cemetery, and the old factory site at North Bridgeport, connected with the family, and then motored to Woodbury, where a bountiful dinner was served at the old Curtis Inn, which was once conducted by Edward's uncle, John J., and aunt, Mary Lewis Green.

After dinner there was speech-making, and the author read the two chapters of this book entitled "What we know of Thomas and Eunice Solley," and "A Romance and a Tragedy." Edward presided, and after some gracious words, read the following lines from Eugene Field:

It seems to me I'd like to go
Where the bells don't ring, nor the whistles blow,
Nor clocks don't strike, nor gongs don't sound,
And I'd have stillness all around.
Not real stillness, but just the trees'
Low whispering, or the hum of bees,
Or brook's faint babbling over stones
In strangely, softly, tangled tones.
Sometimes it seems to me I must
Just quit the city's din and dust
And get out where the sky is blue;
And say, how does it seem to you?

The party then motored to George's Hill, losing their way in that deserted region when near the place, as has been done on both trips before, but finally coming out in the



FIRST FAMILY GATHERING AT GEORGE'S HILL, 1910.



THREE GENERATIONS OF DESCENDANTS AT THOMAS SOLLEY'S GRAVE, 1910.

HIS DESCENDANTS

glorious open country at the top, near the old graveyard. Here the Revolutionary soldier's grave was decorated with flags and flowers.

The journey back to Bridgeport, down the mountain, through Kettletown, and along the Housatonic River, over the road which our ancestors must have traveled many times, was one of the most beautiful and peaceful I have ever taken, and the setting sun lent its most wondrous colors to the deepening twilight.

The following members of the family were present on this occasion: Edward J. Morgan, Emma Lowe Morgan, Helena Morgan, John B. Solley, Sr., Dr. John B. Solley, Jr., Dr. Fred P. Solley, Miss A. F. Solley, Rev. George W. Solley, William E. Peck, and the youngest member of the party, Russell Edward Morgan second, the fifth descendant from Thomas and Eunice, through Polly Solley.

This is the first time in the history of the family that any number of them have been gathered together for a celebration, and all hoped that this was but the beginning of many such reunions.

John B. Solley, Sr., was elected President; Rev. George W. Solley Secretary, of the Sons of Thomas Solley.

THOMAS SOLLEY SECOND LINE.

Thomas and Martha Solley.

Thomas Solley second was born at Weston, Connecticut, April 16, 1800. Of his childhood we know almost nothing, except that it covered the period of his parents' greatest illness and poverty. In after years he never seemed to find anything in it to look back to, and was always singularly reticent regarding both the life of his parents and his own childhood. He had the ordinary district schooling of those days, which was of the poorest.

Then everyone had to work—children were brought up to work. Work was not only the regular duty, but the regular pastime of everyone. Life was almost a mere

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struggle for existence. Children had to assume responsibilities early in life. The families were large, and each member was given his special duty. The boys were brought up from childhood to work out-of-doors. They matured early, often becoming rugged and sturdy at thirteen and fourteen years of age, and able to do a man's work. So it was not uncommon to have a boy sent out to work at the very beginning of his teens. At twenty-one he was expected to be grown up, married, and settled down in life.

Thomas Solley emigrated early from his home at Weston, and pushed up into the country, near his aunt, Polly Fanton. The next we know of him he was apprenticed to one Eleazer Hoyt to learn the trade of making fur hats, at Wolfpits, a little settlement just beyond Redding Ridge, in the town of Bethel. This route which Thomas took is singularly the same over which the British soldiers passed when they marched to burn the town of Danbury.

At this time Thomas was a remarkably healthy boy, rugged, rosy, and ambitious. His spirits bubbled up within him with uncontrollable fire and wit. Although life was hard, it was full of pranks, and he was always the ringleader in them. Wherever he went, his striking personality overtopped all the rest. Others followed; he always led. He was always feared, and always quoted, and after almost a hundred years there are stories still afloat in that region of Thomas Solley's striking personality, his pranks, and his wit.

Boys were often bound out to learn trades in those days. The people were harsh and the times were hard, and they were not handled gently. The overflowing vitality of these rugged youths often brought them into conflict with masters and higher powers. Thomas had a devoted follower in one of the apprentices who was named Fuller, who followed him like a shadow, and many are the stories of the rough pranks of those two when they put their heads together. It is said that Thomas had such a masterful personality that Fuller would do anything he told him, no matter how severe the



THOMAS SOLLEY, SECOND, AND MARTHA TREAT SOLLEY.

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punishment it brought him. Thomas is reported to have been a Methodist. The Baptists and the Methodists each took turns in holding services in the district school house. There was quite a little rivalry between the two religious sects. Once, when the Baptists were holding services, "Tom," as he was called, climbed the roof and covered the chimney with flat stones, which smoked out the Baptists, who wondered why the fireplace chimney didn't draw that evening.

After his period of apprenticeship, Thomas moved into the newly-settled region of Kettletown, in Southbury, where he began the making of fur hats by himself. He married Melinda Landers, whom he loved devotedly, about the time he "attained his majority." The settlement in Kettletown was made up of a group of congenial hatters and farmers, who intermarried, so that they became as one family. Life was of the roughest and hardest, and at best the region was an impossible one, even with its fine water supply. It was hard to get to, and hard to get out of.

In the history of South Britain, Connecticut, Sketches and Records, Record Print, Seymour, Connecticut, 1898, page 146, we find the following account of the early hat industry:

This was at one time quite a flourishing business here. One of the early shop owners was Judson Manville, whose shop was west of the church, on the east bank of the Pomperaug River, where a portion of the shop is yet standing. He employed about a dozen men, among whom was Thomas Solley, who afterwards had a hat shop at Kettletown, which was then a thriving community, most of the men being hatters by trade. Then there was another hat shop at Kettletown owned by Ransom Hinman. Each employed about half a dozen men.

Gamaliel Benham's shop was near the old Burton Canfield mill. He used the furs of animals trapped in the neighboring forests: coons, rabbits, minks, skunks, etc., as well as the fur of cats. An anecdote is told of Bill Botsford in this connection. He bought a hat and agreed to pay for it with a certain number of skunk skins "as they run." Some time after, not having brought the skins, he was reminded of his debt.

He replied "Wal, you agreed to take them as they run, and they are running yet."

The hatting business ended here about 1833.

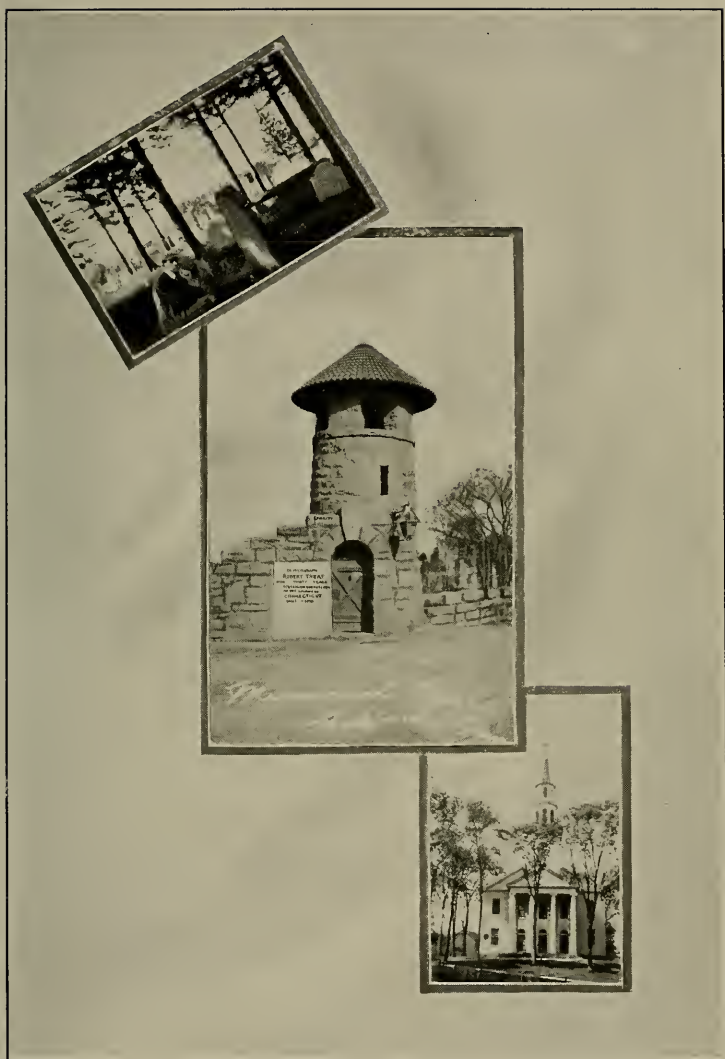
THOMAS SOLLEY AND

The same book of South Britain, page 133, refers to the Methodist Episcopal church at George's Hill, and mentions the names of the most zealous members. Among these we find "Thos. Solley and wife, who lived about half a mile west of Hull's Hill schoolhouse."

Thomas owned, we are told, a rough farm of one hundred and fifty acres at Kettletown, where the house is yet standing. He had one son born to him of his first happy marriage, a boy of great brightness and ability, who in character greatly resembled his father. But the young wife, Melinda, succumbed to the rough life of this new settlement, and died December 30, 1834, aged only twenty-nine years. The grief of the rugged Thomas was so great at the loss of his young wife, that he was fairly "beside himself," and he married again quickly. He went to his Methodist traveling preacher with his grief and said, "I must have a companion. Won't you recommend a woman to me who would make me a good wife?" The preacher replied, "There is a smart young widow named Martha Bradley at Middlebury, why don't you go to see her?" Thomas went; and she listened to his earnest plea.

Martha Treat Bradley was the daughter of David and Lydia Treat, and resided at her father's farm in Middlebury, Connecticut. She married as a young woman a most estimable young man from one of the old families, by the name of John Bradley. From this marriage there was one child, Elizabeth Bradley, a most beautiful girl who was like her mother both in looks and character. Bradley lived for a short time only after their marriage, and in sorrow his widow went back to her father's house. Here Thomas found her; and the two young sorrowing hearts turned towards each other.

The Treats were one of the oldest, most aristocratic, and best-known families of old Connecticut. Martha was a direct descendant of the colonial governor, Robert Treat of old Milford, one of the founders of that town, and later founder of the city of Newark, New Jersey.



GOVERNOR ROBERT TREAT'S TABLE TOMBSTONE.
GOVERNOR ROBERT TREAT'S MEMORIAL TOWER, MILFORD.
OLD FIRST CHURCH.

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The Treats came originally from Pitminster, Somerset, England, about 1638, when Richard Treat, with wife, three sons and six daughters settled at Watertown, Massachusetts. From Watertown, they emigrated to Wethersfield, Connecticut, and from that on, the family as a whole centered in Connecticut. As far as is known, every person by the name of Treat in the United States is descended from this Richard Treat.

Richard Treat was a man of great talent and wealth, and of the highest social standing in Connecticut. He is mentioned by name in the famous charter given to Connecticut by King Charles II., as one of the patentees. He was a member of Governor Winthrop's council in 1663-64.

Robert Treat, second son of Richard, emigrated when very young from Wethersfield to the new settlement called Milford. Before he was sixteen years old, he was numbered as seventh among the free planters of Milford, and was one of nine appointed to survey and lay out the lands. Like Washington, the care and exactness which is necessary to the good surveyor did much to make him the daring and successful Indian fighter which he afterwards became.

Robert Treat became a large land owner and was connected with everything important in the colony. Although young, he was selected for magistrate, and for the office of laying on of hands at the installation of the second minister of the town.

Robert Treat had charge of the Connecticut troops at the Bloody Brook massacre, Deerfield, Massachusetts, and at that time saved the village of Northfield. Treat also led one of the famous charges which exterminated the Narragansett Indians in 1675.—(See Fisk's Beginnings of New England.)

He was governor and deputy governor of Connecticut for thirty years, and figured in the famous scene at Hartford, when King James II. demanded the charter and sent on Sir Edmund Andros to secure it. King James II. termed Treat "His trusty and well-beloved."

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Governor Robert Treat was buried at old Milford Center, where his table tombstone can now be seen in the old graveyard near the railroad station.

From the son of Governor Treat, the Reverend Samuel Treat, who was settled over the old first church at Eastham, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, was descended Robert Treat Paine, the signer of the Declaration of Independence.

The Treats were great emigrators, and their descendants can now be found all over the United States.

David and Lydia Treat, the parents of Martha, were said to have owned the best farm at Middlebury, and were people of the very highest standing and character in that place. (See Genealogy of the Treat Family, by John Harvey Treat, A. M.)

Martha Treat represented all that was noblest and best in the old families of New England. The marriage was an incompatible one—it could not be otherwise with such a rugged individualist as Thomas Solley second—but Martha Treat became the mainstay of his life, the anchor of his hopes, and the guide to his destiny. She was a small, sprightly woman, very erect in her carriage, keen of eye, amounting almost to Scotch canniness, always definite of statement, and decided in her action. No greater contrast to Thomas could be imagined. Up against his rugged, virile strength, born into hard conditions and knowing no other, yet with all his roughness, firm and true, he stood like a rock as a background for this slender, active woman who was to be the guiding force and the mainspring of his life for many years. Martha and Thomas Solley became the ancestors of all the male descendants in our line by the name of Solley, as far as is known in this country, to the present day.

The rough life at Kettletown was so distasteful to Martha that Thomas soon moved, as did many of the people of that region, to the beautiful little village of South Britain in the same town. Here Thomas engaged in the same business of making fur hats. Here his two sons, David Treat and John

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Beach Solley, were born. He then moved to Bethel, Connecticut, where he resided for the remainder of his life.

Bethel is a place beautiful for situation, almost like a Swiss village, among the hills. It was a pre-Revolutionary War village, which was formerly a part of the town of Danbury, and struggled picturesquely along the old road from Redding Ridge to Danbury which lies over Hoyt's Hill. The chief industry of the place, besides farming, was that of making fur hats, for which there were in those days several shops or factories.

Thomas did not engage in business for himself after he went to Bethel, but worked for one or another of the shops, until he quit work when he was about seventy-six years of age. The date of his going to Bethel was about 1837. At that time there was great financial distress in the country, and it was almost impossible to obtain money for anything. Thomas was very poor, but he had a brave wife, who was always a match for anything. Martha Treat was always his greatest asset in life.

Thomas and Martha now set about home-making in dead earnest. They moved several times, living at Wolfpits, at Grassy Plain, and at several places in the village center, winning in each place the respect of everyone. If Martha Solley had been a woman of affluence and leisure, she could not have carried herself with more dignity. Finally Thomas got tired of moving and said, "now I am going to have a home of my own if I only put two boards together and get under them." About the year 1850 Thomas bought the place which was to become his home until he died. Two other generations were also to live there after him. Though the friendliness of P. T. Barnum, who afterwards became the great showman of world renown, and who was also born and brought up on the same street near where Thomas bought his home at Bethel, he was enabled to secure the place on a mortgage. This mortgage, through the great economy and thrift of his wife, Martha, was soon paid off.

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The Solley homestead at Bethel is situated at the foot of Hoyt's Hill, over which the British soldiers marched to burn the town of Danbury. It is a picturesque spot, containing a group of two old houses and several outbuildings which may have been standing during the Revolutionary War, two gardens, and a fine orchard. The place blossomed like a rose under Thomas and Martha, who repaired it and made it comfortable. The orchard was set out by Thomas himself, who dug up young wild apple trees along the roadside, grafting and setting them out again in his orchard, where they became as thrifty trees as I have ever seen, bearing an unusual amount of fruit, which he lived to enjoy for many years. Thomas then bought other land—a large pasture on top of Hoyt's Hill, another pasture in Wolfpits; he also came to own tracts of land at Stony Hill and Elmwood.

Although Thomas confined his chief attention to hatting, he possessed an innate love of the soil, which made him dabble in farming as long as he and Martha were able to attend to it. He always had a pig and hens, and sometimes cows and sheep. He and Martha lived in the old-fashioned way, laying in for the winter supplies of pork, hams, corned beef, dried beef, sausage, as well as vegetables and fruit. Martha was a model housekeeper, and could always set a fine table at very short notice. I remember distinctly the preparations for winter; the curing of hams, the making of sausage, the pieces of dried beef which were hung about the old kitchen, the great amount of preserves and pickles of all kinds, together with home-made soap, wine, and cider. Grandmother was also considerable of a doctor, both grandparents being believers in the old-fashioned Thompsonian method of doctoring by roots and herbs. Martha's brother, Willis Treat, was a regular physician of that school. Grandmother had a room in the house which was always filled with the different roots and herbs which she dried for medicine, and people often came to her to be doctored. She was what was called a "facultized person," and seemed equal to any and all emergencies.



SOLLEY HOME AT BETHEL.

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Grandfather and grandmother became identified in every way with the life of the village. They were still ardent Methodists of the old school, and in this they found congenial company at Bethel. It was hard for the people to go to Danbury to attend the Methodist services, and so the earnest souls of that faith got together for "class meetings" at the home of one Horace Trowbridge, where each brought a candle for light. The work grew, and soon after this regular Methodist meetings were held at the old Grassy Plain school house, grandfather and grandmother taking part in founding the movement, and being always the most ardent supporters of its work.

Not long after this a project was set on foot to build a church. The cost was estimated and all of the Methodists were taxed "according to their several abilities." Grandfather's tax amounted to seventy-five dollars, and although he had not yet paid for his homestead, and had no money, he cheerfully set about working to earn his apportionment.

The church was built in 1847, on Central Street, opposite the old town school house on the south, and the old first parish church on the north. It was occupied with great joy and Methodistic fervor, and constant revivals so increased its members that in twelve years they outgrew these quarters, and another movement was set on foot to build a still larger church. The plans for the new church were laid on quite a magnificent scale for meeting houses of those days in a village the size of Bethel. It was a large square building, with very long and many-paned windows, and had a high steeple. Underneath the church there were class rooms and a large basement room. The interior was frescoed very handsomely after the manner of a Grecian temple, which was a great contrast to the Methodistical services held there. I distinctly remember this church in my childhood, with its large, square, white pulpit and red velvet cushion at one end; and the long, old-fashioned chorus choir, which occupied the singers' gallery at the other end, where even then the singers

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used the old-fashioned tune book, and little thumb book containing the words. Way down into the seventies they still held morning and afternoon services every Sunday. Between services the children attended Sunday school, while the more religious ones held their "class meetings." There was more or less visiting round between services among friends who lived near the church, when lunches were shared or refreshments served.

This larger church built during the Civil War proved, however, to be a sort of elephant on their hands. During my childhood its membership was never large. The old-fashioned sturdy and enthusiastic Methodists had died off one by one, and there were few religious revivals to fill their places. It was a time of transition throughout the life of the entire nation. The church was always in debt, and had hard work even to raise its annual expenses. It was also greatly overshadowed by both the old parish Congregational church, which was very strong and wealthy, and the Episcopal church, which in those days was at the height of its power.

The first Methodist meeting house was a very modest affair, and after it was given up it was turned into a hat factory and used for many years by Judd & Co., in fact, until it was burned in 1908. It was always spoken of as the old Methodist church.

Grandfather and grandmother, as well as my father and mother, remained most faithful to it during its years of transition and hardship. During the ministry of Reverend William Brown, from 1879 to 1881, the church got on its feet again. He paid some of its debt, partly refurnished the meeting house, and greatly added to its membership and influence in the community. From that time on, prosperity became its lot and it is now one of the strongest churches of that denomination in Fairfield county. Grandfather and grandmother were among its strongest supporters until the day of their death.

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In the autumn of 1856, some of the Masonic brethren of Bethel began to consider the forming of a lodge there, as it was inconvenient to attend the one in Danbury. About fifteen men met in Frederick Judd's school house on South Street to discuss and act upon the matter. The community was greatly prejudiced against that institution, but several meetings were held. Finally the lodge was instituted January 8, 1857, when John M. Hart, Sr., was installed as its first worshipful master. Thomas Solley's name is among the charter members. We are told that Bethel at this time had a population of one thousand seven hundred, with twenty-four resident Masons.

In politics Thomas and his sons also were most ardent Republicans and Abolitionists. In the latter sixties and early seventies I can remember distinctly, as a child, the great heat which accompanied their political discussions and their stories about the then recent Civil War. But none of the family, except David Treat Solley, took any part in the Civil War. A horror of war has followed this family.

Some phases of the family life of my grandfather and grandmother in the old home at Bethel, Connecticut, remain very vivid pictures to me today after almost forty years. Their home was plain but very comfortable, and it was the center of all their affections and hopes. They had a great deal of company, as they kept up with many of their old family friends the tradition of "visiting round." The Treats were a large family, and many of them visited grandfather and grandmother at least once a year, always coming without sending word, after the custom of those days. We almost expected as children upon coming home from school to find the house full of excitement and gladness, because Uncle Robert and Aunt Maria, or Uncle George and Aunt Elizabeth, or some other relatives had come. At such times the regular family routine was set aside. The best of everything was brought out, and the hours were passed most cheerfully, comparing experiences and telling stories. Many were the visits

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which they received from Dr. Willis Treat of Middlebury. He came in an old-fashioned phaeton carriage, always bringing his large old medicine chest studded with brass nails, and the fragrance of his Thompsonian root and herb medicines would fill the house. Uncle Robert Treat always came over in October for the Danbury agricultural fair, bringing with him his latest inventions of horse rakes and hay tedders, which he exhibited there.

Besides the visits of the family friends, their home was the center for many years of a large number of religious protégées and traveling vagrants. As I look back, it seems as though there were always some of these strange people in the house. There were "Aunt Gusty Platt" and "Sister Lois Sherman," who sometimes brought with them a whole band of praying and singing sisters, who flourished both upon grandmother's good nature and her good food.

There was a very delightful old-fashioned woman in crape whom everybody called "Mother Morgan." She rode in a very old-fashioned vehicle unlike anything seen on the streets in those days. The ardent minister, Reverend William Brown, had ferreted her out of one of the out-districts, and she seemed like one from another age and time, who had risen from the dead. She had lived so long in isolation that she seemed to have no connection with the present. During the latter part of grandmother's life, "Mother Morgan" figured largely in Methodist circles, and having a "long stocking-foot" she became a very substantial contributor to the church finances. She and "Aunt Gusty Platt" were great friends, and their ancient vehicles were often seen hitched to Thomas Solley's post.

There was also Kate Northrup, who worked in the family as "help," off and on, for many years; and a little diminutive old woman whom we called "Aunt Eunice," and there was "Georgia Platt" and "Julia," and "Hannah Pratt" and "Libbie Downs," all of whom came and went by turns.

Grandfather and grandmother were known for miles

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around for their hospitality, as well as for their ardent religious zeal, and they never refused anyone a meal, or a shelter for the night. A few of these itinerants were of the male persuasion, but almost all were from among the "sisters."

Among the male itinerants were several old-fashioned "root and herb doctors," each having a special remedy for some ailment. They would discourse for hours upon the virtues of their medicines. Among these was a Dr. Richards, a half Indian, who was a man of great mental power and native skill. He was one of the most interesting conversationalists I have ever met, and his shining black hair, with his deep-set, burning eyes, gave him a very attractive appearance. He doctored in the family, when there was any need of it, for many years, but diseases were never in our line.

Then there was also the last of the old line of peddlers who traversed the country, a man by the name of Hershberg, who always paid for his food and lodging with his wares.

All of these itinerants came and went at will, and without warning, sometimes staying quite a while and helping about the place. Sometimes they came for money to further projects of their own. Sometimes it was a tale of poverty, which always found its way to grandmother's heart.

Neighborhood life was very different in those days from what it is now. It had a touch of sane socialism about it and people lived more like one family. Everyone was expected to run in periodically to see what the other was doing, to give a hand at housework, to exchange gossip, or to talk religion. Then there were those of the old families who still kept up the prestige of the old-fashioned calling, and five o'clock teas, where very dainty repasts of fresh biscuit and honey, the best preserves and nicest pound cake were served. I distinctly remember some of these elegant and soft-spoken old ladies with their old-fashioned rustling silks, India shawls, silk mitts and quaint bonnets, who came in such dignified manner and conversed in such gentle tones. Grandmother was always at her best on such occasions and presided like a queen. Callers

always expected to be treated to cake or fruit. People were not considered hospitable unless they did so. Neighbors tested preserves and talked of the merits of butter and pickles, and the latest recipes for making puddings and pies. On rare occasions cake and home-made wine were brought out.

Old-fashioned quilting bees were even then the order, and many a time have I seen the frames brought out and the neighbors assembled to "get off Sister Solley's quilt quickly." The sewing societies of the churches in those days largely earned their money by quilting. Old people always sat by the fire or the window, the women usually wearing caps. Stockings, mittens, and throat mufflers were still knitted by hand.

The ladies' fancy work consisted of tatting, crocheting, and all kinds of worsted work, lamp mats and tidies; everyone pieced bedquilts out of the many kinds of calico, and gossip often ran upon such work. It was quite the thing to display one's bedquilts, showing the different patterns of "log cabin," "tea chest," "rising sun," and "basket" work. Children made worsted work by means of wooden spools and pins, which fond mothers often displayed. Everyone made rag carpets and it became the pastime of all in the family to help make the next new carpet. The older people cut the rags, some expert among us dyed the various colors, and the children sewed the rags, winding them into large two-pound balls for each of which we children received two cents. When mother declared that there were rags enough, they were sent off to "Aunt Lucy Hoyt," or some other ancient dame, who still had an old hand-loom in place, and beat up the filling in the old-fashioned way.

It was true that wax work and cardboard and splint work crept in for light fancy work, but most of the older people kept to the making up of household linen, bedquilts, and rag carpets for their regular pastime work. When rag carpets were tacked down, liberal layers of fresh rye straw were spread under them to keep the floors warm. Some of these

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carpets were very handsome, and it was not uncommon to see one on the floor of the "best room."

The neighbors in those days went to each other's houses for whatever they needed, and I remember this was so at grandfather's whether it was a call for grandmother's mourning, which some neighbor wanted to wear to a funeral, or the quilting frames, or a whitewash brush. It might even be a demand for the long board in the sink room, which was used to "lay out their dead." There were no undertakers in those days, and when there was a death everyone turned in to assist. A funeral was a most solemn occasion, which everyone was expected to attend in black. When there was a severe sickness, "watchers" were always provided by the neighbors, each serving in turn. Contagious diseases were not feared as they are now, and no one ever thought of refusing when their turn came to "watch" for a night. In those days the old traditions about death still prevailed and it was the custom to "sit up with the dead."

Grandfather and grandmother's devotion to the church was of the highest order, and they always occupied seats at the right hand side on the side aisle where, as grandmother used to say, "the sparks from the altar could fall on them." Many were the poor creatures living in the out districts and in other towns who found their home a sort of half-way house to the church, where they might stop and rest, as well as secure a meal before going on to the later watch night or revival services.

Somewhere in the seventies a neighborhood class meeting was formed. Several of the original Methodists were becoming too old to attend church and these meetings were started primarily to favor them, but in time the meetings were held at other's houses, so that they became a general neighborhood class meeting which continued for many years. The meetings started in a district called Nashville, meeting periodically at the homes of Alonzo Collins, "Uncle" John Bevins, Hoyt Fenner, and John Ronk. Meetings were also held of this same

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class at the other end of the village, at grandmother's, and at "Brother and Sister" Joseph Beeker's.

On grandmother's class-meeting day the house was made scrupulously clean and put in almost funeral order. All the chairs were brought into the old kitchen living room, the other furniture pushed back against the wall, and a lanthorn hung on the front porch. The members came in groups from the different sections of the village, usually carrying lanthorns, as there were no street lights. The meeting was of the old-fashioned Methodist order, with much impromptu singing, certain favorite hymns being sung over and over again with great enthusiasm, and without the aid of an instrument, the tune being struck by the leader. Many were the fervent testimonies and prayers which followed, and the meetings rarely broke up until a late hour.

But the greatest occasion of all was when the minister called. He visited regularly, usually taking a village street at a time. Sometimes word was sent on from house to house that the "minister was coming," so that those at the end of the line would have time to make preparations. When the minister's visit was a surprise, the one looking the best was sent to the door, while the others dodged to their rooms to straighten their hair, and put on at least a fresh apron. When the alarm came, the women hustled to the bedrooms for a change of dress, and children were hastily dragged to the sink and scrubbed unmercifully because "the minister was coming." Chairs were quickly put in place, and when at last he appeared, he was greeted with great form and ceremony. The family to the smallest child, together with the "help" and visitors, were called into the best room, where after a very stilted conversation, the minister inquired of each in turn as to their religious standing and experience; then all knelt in prayer, and each was prayed for solemnly and in turn. The minister was always treated to the best refreshments which the house afforded, and often given something in addition to take home.

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It was considered a great privilege in those days to have a call from the minister. In my grandfather's home his office was most highly revered, and whether they liked his personality or his preaching, it made no difference. He was always treated with the greatest respect. Whenever any harvest was gathered or there was a special making of sausage, pies, or preserves, often, and sometimes regularly, a sample of the best of it all was sent to the minister. I remember as a child even being coaxed and bribed to take something to the minister. I remember distinctly my grandmother once saying after hearing a neighbor complain about the minister, "Well, George, there is one thing you can always say, that our family never has had a quarrel with any minister and whatever has happened, we have always been loyal to the church." The church was always called "The House of God." The ministry was considered a sacred office, and the minister a man "sent of God."

Although my people were such ardent Methodists, I never remember any bigotry or intolerance. As a child I was always allowed to go to the old parish Congregational church, whenever there was anything special going on, and I always attended Easter and confirmation services at the Episcopal church. When grandfather and grandmother first moved to Bethel, before Methodist services were held, they bought a prayer book and attended the Episcopal church for one year. All my childhood I was a member of the Band of Hope, which met every Sunday afternoon at the Congregational church. All religious denominations at Bethel held my grandfather and grandmother in the greatest respect.

My grandparents had a human benevolence which outstripped all bounds of their Methodism. After many years of struggles, they had at last "gotten on in the world." They owned their home and had some money laid by. Their children were well started out in life, so it seemed to even irritate those two brave souls, that anyone else should be in need or want in this life. The family washerwoman, Mrs. Pratt, who

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used to walk regularly three miles every week from Danbury to do their washing, owned a small mortgage on her place, which she had bought with much sacrifice. Grandmother was never satisfied until she helped her to pay it off. Her two protégées, Joseph and Louisa Beeker, had never been able to get a home of their own, until grandmother became their bank, saving their ten-cent pieces for them, week by week, until they had enough to purchase a building lot.

For some years the aged father of Martha, David Treat of Middlebury, lived with them. In time grandfather's sister, Julia, had no home and she lived with them for "a spell." Ofttimes grandmother's "help" were mere invalids whom she nursed back into life, or helped safely over the confines of this life into another existence. She treated all her "help" more like daughters than she did like servants, often waiting upon them to an unwarrantable degree.

One of my pleasantest childhood memories of my grandfather's and grandmother's home at Bethel is the long winter evenings. At such times the cooking stove in the old kitchen living-room was heated red hot. The table was drawn up near the fire. Grandfather would bring up a great dish of red, green, and brown apples out of his well-stocked cellar. Grandmother would crack walnuts or butternuts. Then as grandmother and the "help" either knitted or sewed, stories would go round. My grandparents being born at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the stories of their childhood were those of the early settlers of our country, and of the Revolutionary War. Well do I remember the accounts of Indians, wolves, and panthers, which so greatly excited my childish imagination. They were probably the stories which they had heard from their parents and grandparents. The memory of these things has always made me feel old.

Sometimes it was Bible reading which occupied the evening, and as children, my brother and I were set to reading the stories of the Old Testament patriarchs and kings. Those old Bible characters, that moved and spoke, were always more a

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living reality in my grandparents' home than any living human beings about them.

Then came the family prayers, when grandfather solemnly read from the Bible and prayed, after which he had his pint of cider, into which he stirred cayenne pepper, after heating it on the stove. Then he went to bed. Grandmother always remained up for some time after grandfather retired, carrying on her devotions oftentimes far into the night.

The housework in my grandparents' home was carried on with the severest punctiliousness and regularity. Every hour had its duty and there were days for this thing and for that. It is true it often turned work into drudgery, and made life a burden, at least to the "men folks," but grandmother's bump of order was over-developed, and her home was a kingdom where she reigned supreme. Meals were served always with as much nicety as for company, and every day, after "work was done," grandmother "dressed up," no matter how late the hour might be. I can still hear across the years grandfather say to us boys, "behave yourself, or I will send you away from the table."

But most memorable in the regular yearly routine of living, after the religious "revivals," were the spring and fall house-cleanings. During these periods of household fury, soap and water, whitewash and sand, wall paper and paint, hammer and nails, each vied with the other for the mastery. The whitewash was slacked in a great kettle out-of-doors, and one of my infantile accomplishments, of which I never heard the last as a boy, was to sit down backwards into the great kettle of whitewash to the dismay of my grandmother.

No home with such a regular housekeeper as my grandmother could ever need much cleaning, but this not did not matter; everything was turned out and scraped and scrubbed; whitewash was put on every available wall space; wall papers were frequently replenished and woodwork repainted; all this being done by my energetic grandmother herself, with sometimes a hired girl or a neighbor to lend a hand. Every

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carpet and piece of furniture, every curtain and piece of linen was minutely inspected and an attempt was made to keep the household supply in perfect condition. New pieces were substituted as the family purse allowed. In fact, this went so far that before my day grandmother had almost entirely gotten rid of her ancient china, furniture, and family relics. Only a little remained which I captured in time and saved from destruction. My grandparents seemed to catch the spirit which followed the Civil War, and although they were very old-fashioned people, they seemed to want everything new, and these annual renovations went on energetically as long as they lived.

Grandmother's style of dress, while very neat and of the best material always, was of the old-fashioned, severely plain, Methodist order. This style she kept up religiously all through the years of the "Grecian bend," "hoopskirt and bustle," the "ruffle, fluting, beading, and overskirt" period, for grandmother never did anything by halves. In her latter years, after the marriage of her granddaughter, Sarah Ferry, she allowed herself a little more latitude as to dress, with now and then a "plain fold" and a little lace. Her bonnets also became less severe and Methodistic looking. Time bends even the sternest hearts.

Grandfather always dressed after the Daniel Webster period fashion, with high collar and big black cravat. Fashions did not change as often then as now. Most of the clothing even then was made by hand, and I remember that he used to have his old-fashioned double decked, black satinets pants cut and made by the last surviving old tailoress of the village.

With all their individuality, grandfather and grandmother were considered a very good-looking couple. Grandmother always sat up stiffly whether riding or sitting in a chair, after the Colonial fashion of her ancestors, and she never wore stays. She and grandfather never stooped with age, and her step remained light and sprightly all her days.

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Grandfather, although he had had a hard life and had never spared himself, was a wonderfully well-preserved old gentleman with a very fair and almost florid complexion. He wore his face clean shaven. In common with all the Solleys, he had the dark hair and the dark blue eyes, which never faded nor changed with age. The summer before he died, when he was in his seventy-eighth year, he was still able to climb to the top of one of the big old cherry trees beside his front door, and stay as long, and eat as much of the fruit from the tree, as he desired. Grandfather did not work for several years before he died. He was in comfortable circumstances, and with his children's aid, his last days became his best ones. I remember him as though it were yesterday, sitting in "grandfather's chair" either beside the window, or upon the veranda where he liked to sit and look at the beautiful view, and dream, and watch the passersby. The house being at the fork of the roads to the districts of Wolfpits, Redding Ridge, Elmwood, and Newtown, there were many teams which passed, and as everyone knew him, many called out their greetings, or news, or jokes, as they drove by. I remember once, as a child, of his calling my attention as he sat there, to the old-fashioned flowering shrubs of which the front yard was full, and which were then blooming in the delicious June air,—roses, syringas, bridal wreath, lilacs, flowering currant,—and sending up their fragrance to heaven.

Neither grandfather nor grandmother were great readers, but the Bible was always an open book resting there on the window shelf, or on a lamp-stand near at hand. Whenever they had any leisure, or whenever they wished to "rest a spell," they sat down, and took up the Bible and read. They did this without any sanctimoniousness, and it was a natural thing with them, as long as I knew them. Both had good eyesight, and oftentimes grandmother would be seen reading "with her glasses on her head." Besides the Bible, there were the regular church periodicals together with a publication called the "Guide to Holiness." Neither of my grand-

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parents ever professed "holiness," and although bands of praying Methodist sisters and brothers often came down upon them and attempted to work them up to it, grandfather and grandmother were too conscientious, and were endowed with too much of nature's common sense, to be talked into it. Grandmother tried especially hard to attain to it. Both she and grandfather had more sterling character and real piety in their little fingers, than the whole army of praying brothers and sisters who came to visit them. It has been somewhat of a relief, as well as a point of pride with me, that they both died without having "got the blessing."

Neither grandfather nor grandmother, as far as I remember, ever had any diseases, aside from the temporary "complaints" of the day. These were usually handled by grandmother's stock of medical knowledge which she had amassed during the years, partly from Dr. Chase's family medicine book, partly from her brother, Dr. Willis Treat, the Thompsonian doctor; but more than all, grandmother's resources were always within herself, and her skill at nursing and her knowledge of remedies came largely from her own observations. When she became puzzled, "Abbie Fairchild," a neighbor, who was known as the "seventh sister" and had peculiar skill in diagnosing diseases and also at compounding root and herb medicines, was called in for consultation. She and grandmother pulled many a one through a temporary illness, and long and serious were their conversations as to the treatment of disease. When anything serious happened, which was rare, Dr. Richards, the old Indian physician, was called in. I never remember a serious illness in my grandfather's house until grandmother was burned by the explosion of a hanging kerosene bracket lamp, the night before Thanksgiving in the year 1876. She was frightfully burned, so much so that the doctor gave no hope of her recovery and it was thought that she would pass out in a few hours; but as usual, grandmother arose to the occasion, disappointed them all, and the flesh grew again upon her face, her shoulder, her arm

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(this was burned almost to a crisp), and her right foot. My father gave up his work at that time, and allowing no one else to nurse her, he cared for her all that winter, with great tenderness. As for grandmother, she always boasted that she *cleaned house* with one hand that very next spring.

Grandmother had also a stroke of paralysis, without warning, in her eighty-first year. At that time she showed little signs of age, her eyes were bright, her step sprightly, and her hair was as black as ever. Again she was given up by the old Indian doctor, but she was to disappoint all prophecies of evil. Although she was badly stricken, so that she had no use of her body and only a partial use of her voice, still the paralysis receded; she learned to walk again like a child, in her eighty-first year, and lived three years more.

Grandfather died in June, 1878. His passing out was quiet and peaceful. He had no disease. The doctor said nothing could be done for him, and he just stepped out of this life "because he had got through." A public funeral was held for him in the church which he had helped to build and which he served for so many years. All that were left of the original Methodists, together with the townspeople of all denominations, met to honor his passing. The Reverend A. P. Chapman, his minister, a man of more refinement and education than the church had ever had before, had noticed grandfather's striking characteristics, and was very fond of him. I remember that his funeral was very different from those of that day. There was no awful solemnity, and the service had a note of victory in it. Mr. Chapman's funeral sermon was from the text, "Like a shock of corn fully ripe."

Martha Solley lived thirteen years after the death of her husband, Thomas Solley. All of this time she kept house the same as before and to all outward appearances there were no breaks in the old order of family life. The period covered the youth and young manhood of my brother and myself, and while the two separate family establishments were kept up in the old houses, we really lived together like one family.

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Grandmother continued to have her "help" about her, and her protégées came and went as before. She enjoyed good health, and visited about more than ever among her relatives and friends. She took the greatest interest in everything that was going on, kept up the old place to its very highest point, and her friendliness and benevolence were given without stint.

As she got on in years and it became hard for her to walk, she declared that if she could have a horse and ride to church she would live ten years longer. A horse was secured, which proved to be one of the greatest comforts of her life, and very few Sundays passed without grandmother and "Aunt Eunice," or some other protégée, being driven to church.

The greatest sorrow of her life was the death of her daughter, Elizabeth Bradley Ferry, August 16, 1871. They had been like two sisters to each other and grandmother never fully got over her untimely passing. But she took the greatest interest in her daughter's children, and Sarah Frances Ferry largely took her mother's place in grandmother's affections. She regularly visited her at Orange, New Jersey, before and after she was married, and not a year passed without the Ferry children coming to Bethel.

In fact, grandmother lived life all over again in the lives of her grandchildren. The old home was always merry with the voices of children in those days. She had seen her children well started out in life. She had lived to see eight grandchildren educated for their work in life, and three of them married. She lived also to see her great-grandchildren, in whom she took the greatest pride. It was a great satisfaction to her that her daughter Elizabeth's son, Edward Ferry, became a regular minister in the church to whose work she had devoted her life.

Following the family precedent, her brother, Dr. Willis Treat, then a widower, came to live with her for a while in his old age. Her favorite brother, Robert Treat, named after the colonial governor from whom we are all descended, and

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his wife, Maria, visited grandmother as long as they lived. They were the dearest old couple, and always acted like lovers. I remember them now, sitting in the twilight by the window, with their chairs side by side, and holding hands. Her son, John B. Solley, who was at that time a very active business man in New York city, made many flying visits to his mother's home during these years. And it was through his generosity largely that she kept up the old home life. Mary Solley of Black Rock also lived with her one winter.

And thus it came to pass with Martha Treat, according to a prophecy made in her youth, that "her last days became her best days." She lived to be full of years and retained the use of all her faculties. As was said of one of old, "her eye was not dimmed nor her natural force abated." She lived these last years surrounded, loved, and looked up to by her family and her friends, and her children made her last days comfortable.

Martha Solley had no real illness at the end. My father and mother had finally moved into her part of the old house. One evening he had gone to her room to bid her good-night. When asked if she needed anything, she replied according to her Methodistic custom, "No, bless the Lord," and passed on quietly into the larger life beyond, as a child falls to sleep contentedly in the arms of its mother. This life had brought her much. Of the future she had no fear.

The quiet little family funeral service was held at the old home. About all of the old Methodists had passed on before her. Her last years had been lived with her children, and those of another time. The sweet and simple service of commemoration, when members of her own family sang the song which she loved, was well on its way when Kate Northrup, one of her poor old protégées who had been lost to sight for many years, came from no one knew where, and walking through the house with an armful of flowers, without taking notice of anyone, laid them on the coffin of her old friend, even while the service continued.

Martha Treat Solley was in every way a remarkable

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woman. Although it is now twenty years since she passed from earth, my memories of her are as clear as though it were yesterday. In fact, so clear-cut was her character, so high her ideals, so forceful her life, that it has always seemed through the years as though she were still alive, a constant and continuing reality in our midst. On such death has no power. They present the realities of a life which is eternal.

George T. Solley.

George T. Solley, the only child of Thomas Solley second by his first wife, Melinda Landers, was born January 18, 1823. We do not know where he was born, neither do we know anything about his childhood.

Frederick Gray seems to have had a great fondness for George T. Solley, who once lived with him at George's Hill. He says of him: "George was a remarkably fine boy. He was of rather shortish, medium height, and looked somewhat like his grandfather, Thomas Solley first, and some like his mother, Melinda Landers [whom Mr. Gray remembered very well]. George did not look like his father, Thomas. All of the Solley girls, sisters of Thomas, were stout and rather thick-set. George was more like Thomas first or his mother Landers, I think, as to height and looks. George went to Bridgeport to learn his trade, and being one of the best boys I ever knew, I felt sure he would get along."

We know that George was born January 18, 1823, and that his mother, Melinda Landers, died December 30, 1834, which made him about twelve years of age at the time that Thomas Solley married my grandmother, Martha Treat Bradley, for his second wife, and took her to his farm at Kettle-town, Southbury, Connecticut, where George must have then been living with him.

I never heard my grandmother, Martha, speak in any but the highest terms of her step-son, George, and I know that he fully reciprocated her mother love and tenderness for him. He always called her mother and showed his regard

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for her in every way, all through his life. His widow also shared in his appreciation of my noble grandmother, and kept up the closest relations with her as long as she lived, although she married out of the family, years after the death of her husband, George T. Solley.

I distinctly remember my uncle, George T. Solley, when I was a little boy, for he used frequently to visit my grandparents at Bethel, Connecticut. As he died in 1872, my remembrance of him probably ranges from the years 1868 to 1872. My father and mother used also to frequently visit my uncle and aunt at Black Rock. I remember one of these visits over a certain Fourth of July. At that time my uncle wore a full beard, was short of stature, and very slight from the disease which he had fought for years. At that time he was unable to do any work. My father used to speak in the highest terms of him, and seemed to have more fondness for him than for any other of his relatives. My father had lived with him when he was a boy at Black Rock while attending the Fairfield Academy, and it was his contract with the sea at that time with its visions of ships, sailors, and merchants, which caused my father afterwards to become a sailor. I remember my aunt wearing a beautiful white silk embroidered crêpe shawl which, together with a very heavy engraved bracelet of very yellow gold, my uncle had brought to her as a result of his mining in California.

Although George Solley looked like his mother, Melinda Landers, and his grandfather, Thomas first, in disposition he was wholly a Solley, and very much like my grandfather, Thomas second. He had an abnormally keen insight, and an intuitive faculty which reached conclusions instantly, and he read people at a glance. He had strong likes and dislikes which showed volcanically on either side, almost without warning. This, in common with all the male Solleys, gave him the name of having a very bad temper. He had a tremendous sense of justice and virtue, and had only contempt, which he expressed with unmeasured terms, for those who did not

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"toe the mark." Together with these things he had the keen Solley wit, and a wonderful power of story-telling and acting which would hold people, as under a spell, listening to him for hours. In all of these characteristics he very strongly resembled, not only his father, but his half-brothers, David Treat and John Beach Solley, as well as the five sons who are their descendants. Is it too much to say that these are the distinct male characteristics of the Solley family which reach back to the ancestors for whom we are searching?

I insert at this time some notes which I made during a call upon Miss Virginia E. Penfield, assistant matron at the Burroughs Home, Black Rock, Connecticut, during the automobile tour of May, 1909. Miss Penfield said: "I am the niece of your aunt, Elizabeth Penfield Solley, whom your uncle, George T. Solley, married. Your aunt, Elizabeth, was the daughter of David and Elizabeth Penfield of Black Rock, one of the oldest and best known families of the old stock in that place. I was a favorite of your aunt Elizabeth. I remember your uncle, George T. Solley, very well, for I lived in the family with them for a number of years. I went to Milwaukee with them and they would like to have adopted me. As I remember your uncle, he had dark hair and complexion and dark blue eyes. He was a small, slender man. Your uncle was a great story-teller, with a wonderful power of imagination and acting. Everybody listened when he told stories. He was very strong in his likes and dislikes. He was strongly individualistic in his tastes and tremendously independent in his actions. I always liked him better than I did my aunt, for he used to take my part when I lived with them. Your uncle George always was very reticent about his early life so that I knew nothing about it. He came back from Milwaukee in 1859, having resided there ten years."

This account was also given me by John Lewis Green, adopted son of John J. Green: "George T. Solley went to Milwaukee with John J. and Mary A. Lewis Green in 1849. Green was a mason by trade. They were accompanied by

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one Peter Norman, an architect, the three going into business together, and taking contracts for building in the new and rapidly-growing city of Milwaukee. A great future was before them, had they not been upset by the 'gold fever.' John J. Green became so excited from the news about the gold in California that he sold his house together with all its furnishings, even to the table, which was then laid for dinner, and taking a few things he purchased an ox-cart and started on an overland route to Pike's Peak, Colorado. There are many traditional stories afloat about this trip, of his meeting wild beasts and Indians, and of his oxen dying. But after many adventures they finally reached Pike's Peak. They returned in after years and settled in Bridgeport, Connecticut, where their descendants now live. Peter Norman's son David today lives at Holyoke, Massachusetts, and is said to make the best blueprint paper of anyone in the United States. These families kept up a most friendly acquaintance with each other all their lives, and often visited back and forth. When we visited George and Elizabeth Solley at Black Rock we had a great time and were always treated to cake and wine."

After their return from Milwaukee my aunt and uncle adopted for their daughter a girl by the name of Mary Ann Howell, who took the name of Solley. I think they took her from an orphan's home, as Mary had little knowledge of either her parents or her childhood. Mary was a most beautiful character, and possessed an innate artistic and refined nature. Some called her handsome. From her carriage and her manners, one would have declared at once that she came of a fine family and that she was an aristocrat to the bone.

During the years in which my uncle was unable to work, his wife and daughter kept city boarders for their support. No one could have been more devoted to her parents than was Mary Solley, and she literally wore herself out in caring for my uncle, keeping up appearances, and making both ends meet. At that time my aunt and uncle were in the most straitened

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circumstances, as he had been unable to work for years, and it was only through the indulgence of Captain Penfield that they were enabled to keep their home. Mary finally married Charles J. Palmer, a nephew of her adopted mother, Elizabeth, of which union there was one child, Emily Pardee Palmer, who died when she was two and one-half years old. The Palmers lived at that time in New Haven, Connecticut, where Charles was in the meat business for a short time. Mary was for many years a sufferer from old-fashioned consumption, like her adopted father, and they lived either at South Norwalk or at Black Rock. Although shut away from the outside world, and often bedridden for months at a time, she seemed instinctively to know what was going on, all about the styles, and the most beautiful method of doing things. Life was to her a thing of beauty, her home always looked artistic, and she was the best of housekeepers. I attended the funerals of both Mary Solley and her child. Both stepped out of this life suddenly, almost without warning, to take up the larger life beyond. Little Emily was always a beautiful child and had her mother's disposition.

In the days of my childhood when my people used to visit my uncle at Black Rock, there stood back of the house a shop and barn combined, where in the days of his illness my uncle used to putter with his tools and entertain his old friends. At that time the place, always beautiful for location, was surrounded with fine shade and fruit trees, among which was a very wonderful mulberry tree which used to be heavily laden with fruit. The place was finally willed by my aunt to her adopted daughter, and by her to Charles J. Palmer, from whom it passed out of the family into the hands of a neighbor, Charles Fancher, to whom they were in debt. The place was afterwards bought by the Gilmans and became a part of their great estate at Black Rock.

When Edward Morgan and I visited the place during our memorable automobile tour of May, 1909, we found that the house had been considerably changed, and that many of the

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old shade trees, together with the barn, had been removed. That same afternoon we also visited the old graveyard as you enter into Fairfield from Black Rock, back of what used to be the old Methodist church. The yard had recently been greatly improved and surrounded by a fine stone wall, with an imitation of an English lich-gate. In this yard are buried, in the old Penfield lot, George T. Solley and Elizabeth Solley, also Mary H. Palmer and her child, Emily Pardee. The only family stone there at that time read:

GEO. T. SOLLEY

DIED

SEPT. 12, 1872

Æ 52 yrs. 6 mo's.

Saved by grace through faith in Christ.

After conversation in later years with father and my uncle about their half-brother, I came to the conclusion that George T. Solley was a Solley to the core, and very much like his father, Thomas second. While showing his likes and dislikes always in a very brusque manner, and contending even furiously for his own opinion and rights, which always made people a little afraid of him, he still had the bearing and the manner of a gentleman. There was an innate virility of character, and a tremendous sense of the things right and wrong, which made people instinctively respect him. Everybody always listened when he spoke and no one ever attempted to run over him more than once. A collision with him usually meant a catastrophe, and that *not on his side!* There seemed to be, although smothered within him, a tremendous ambition for something great which he never attained. Born during the "hard times" of our country, going from place to place to establish himself in business and earn a livelihood, the hard conditions of the time seemed to sour his nature and disappoint his hopes. Although many years of sickness incapacitated him for work, and left him sore of heart and irritable of temper, one could not but see within the man that

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which compelled admiration. He thus repeats the history of Thomas first.

His wife, Elizabeth, was one of the proudest and highest-strung women I have ever known. Coming from one of the old aristocratic families of the place, her ambition was always to be in the front rank. She and my uncle were very incompatible in temper, but each loved their home, and this became the bond which kept them together. They always lived in good style, and royally entertained their friends. Aunt Elizabeth was one who always put her best foot forward. She was a woman of striking appearance, fond of reading, and was always well-informed. She appreciated my uncle's best qualities, and enjoyed his stories and wit. As I look back upon their home it speaks well for the high ideals of my uncle, that he selected such a capable woman to be his helpmate through life.

Both my uncle and aunt were passionately fond of children, as well as of their home. But no children came to bless this union, which may in part account for the sense of disappointment which seemed to have mastered their lives. Children do not seem to go with the family name. Although four generations have come onto the stage of action since the marriage of the first Thomas Solley in America, there are today, as far as I know, only nine of his male descendants living that bear the name of Solley.

My chief thought in this sketch has been to preserve the distinct characteristics which the life of George T. Solley embodied, which I hold are the characteristics of the founder of the family in America.

David Treat and Sarah Augusta Solley.

David Treat Solley was born at South Britain, Connecticut, January 13, 1836. He was named after his maternal grandfather, David Treat of Middlebury. He received the ordinary education of the public schools of those days, and

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began to "work out" away from home in 1849, when he was thirteen years of age. He went to Black Rock, Connecticut, to live with his half-brother, George T. Solley, of whom he was very fond, in 1852, when he was 16 years of age. There he attended Fairfield Academy. He remained a little over a year, when he returned home to Bethel, and in 1854 went to work making fur hats, following the trade of his father.

Like many a young man before and since his time, he had an "itching for the sea." This resulted in 1855, when he was nineteen years old, in his embarking upon the merchant ship *Black Warrior*, in which he sailed to San Francisco by way of Cape Horn. This trip covered two years and three months. He returned by the same route on the United States frigate *Independence*. During my childhood there was always displayed upon the parlor mantel and upon wall brackets some very beautiful sea shells, which he had brought back as souvenirs of this trip.

During the Civil War he entered the government service on the gunboat *Sumter* and served in the navy three years—from January, 1862, to 1865. The gunboat was used in blockading the Southern ports and he was shifted several times to other small boats, which were in great demand, because of the large amount of sea frontage. The Southern ports sent out "runners" to skip the blockade and sail to England for supplies. There was many a lively tussle with the Southern "blockade runners," but all of the boats on which he served escaped damage.

It was the custom for young women in many towns surrounding Bethel to work for a season at trimming Derby fur hats in the hat factories of that place. Among those who worked in this way was Augusta Wood, daughter of Heman and Thalia Treat Wood of Bridgewater, Connecticut. There were four of the Wood girls, who were called respectively the "big one," "little one," "married one," and "pretty one." Of course David Treat fell in love with the pretty one, and he married her at her father's house in Bridgewater, February

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24, 1863. The young couple did not go to housekeeping at first, but lived with his father and mother at the Solley homestead in Bethel. There his son, George Willis Solley, was born. David and Sarah went to keeping house in the front part of the old homestead in 1865. Their second son, Frank Deming Solley, was born December 10, 1866. Sarah Augusta Wood descended from Governor Robert Treat, through the Bridgewater Treats.

David Treat Solley has worked at hatting all his life, being known as one of the best workmen in town. Like his grandfather, Thomas first, and his own father, Thomas second, he spent the first years of his life roaming about. He was about the same age when he went to sea as Thomas first was when he crossed the Atlantic. He then settled down, and home became to him the only spot on earth, the center of his affections, and the guide to his hopes. Like his own father he has been too much of an individualist to be a lover of societies or clubs.

All through his parents' last years he was the greatest comfort to them, looking after their interests in every way, not only about the old homestead, but also in the town, and it was largely to the personal care of both him and his wife, that Thomas and Martha were so comfortable in their "declining years." No one ever showed a more self-sacrificing spirit, more devotion to the interests of others than did both David and Augusta Solley in caring for their father and mother.

While David has had no love for farming in the same degree that his father had, still this family trait has been shown in him by a constant love of cultivating small fruits, which he has done outside of his regular work in the factory all the years of his home life. To the fine orchard which my grandfather cultivated, David Treat has added every kind of small fruit; pears of many varieties, quinces, plums, peaches, currants, raspberries, blackberries, and grapes. The soil of the old place at the foot of the hill is so rich, and his knowl-

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edge and skill are so great, that in the fruit season people often come for miles around to see the fruit which he raises. His specialty has been the raising of fine grapes from those of the old standard type up to the most delicate white variety. He is also considered an expert in fine grafting and propagating, raising pear trees from seed, and when work has been dull in the factory he has sometimes given his time entirely to the work of a nurseryman.

It has been his custom for years to arise early and work for several hours in his garden among his pet vines and shrubs. It has been largely due to this healthful pastime that he is a remarkably well preserved man, after many years of hard manual labor in the hat factories.

David and Augusta Solley were members of the Methodist Episcopal church, whose interest they served many years. As time went on the new incoming life of the community centered around that church, while their friends were among the old families which attended the old First Parish Congregational church. So they took their letters from the Methodists and joined the Congregationalists, where they have remained in very happy relations until this day.

David Treat Solley was for four years secretary and treasurer of the hat makers' society at Bethel. Here he served faithfully during some stormy years in the hatting business.

David Treat Solley inherited the rugged constitution of his father, and in temper and disposition is most like him of any of his descendants. He has the same ever-present love of fun and mimicry. No such story-teller is known in all the town, and people have listened for hours to his descriptions and striking characterizations of persons and events. He has a powerful voice and a wonderful flow of oratory, which have always brought him the entire attention and interest of people wherever he has spoken, whether in the church or at a political meeting. He has been said to be the only man in town who never feared a mob, and he has been able to hold and quiet the most turbulent foreign crowd

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which ever gathered at a hatters' meeting. At such times his appearance would become highly dramatic, and with absolute self-forgetfulness he would herald the cause he was advocating, regardless alike of the opinions of his hearers or the consequences of his words. With his vivid imagination and his dramatic way of picturing things he would hold the people breathless, making them hilarious with laughter, or wild with anger.

As strong an individualist as his father, he has always spoken his views fearlessly upon all subjects, and on all occasions. Like him also, neither hard work nor the progress of years has deprived him of his faculties, or taken his strength. He lives today, enjoying the old homestead of his father and mother, and any one looking at him at seventy-four years of age would discount the number by many years.

Sarah Augusta Solley has always been a woman of the sweetest nature and of refined thought. Always religious in her aspirations and artistic in her taste, she has made one of the best mothers and one of the noblest helpmates that ever lived. While her life has been lived quietly and unobtrusively, often filled with care and ill-health, her greatest power has shown itself in sacrifice for others, and her chief joy has been in doing good. While many names are recalled by being written on high, still sacrifice is the very crown of love, and one who "spoke as never man spake" declared such to be the very "salt of the earth."

George Willis Solley.

George Willis Solley was born in his grandparents' home, and spent the first twenty years of his life in Bethel, Connecticut. From his early "teens" he has been active in religious and philanthropic work. When a mere boy, he taught a large class of boys and young men, and conducted weekly religious meetings of persons, many of them older than himself.

He left home when he was twenty-three, locating in Massachusetts, where he has since resided.

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His four pastorates have been: First Congregational Church, Hampden; First Congregational Church, Deerfield, Massachusetts (Unitarian); Christ Church, Dorchester, Massachusetts; and Church of the Unity, Winchendon, Massachusetts.

The following account, published in the *Winchenden Courier* at the time of his installation over the Church of the Unity in that town, May 9, 1905, gives a brief account of his life and activities:

George Willis Solley was born at Bethel, Connecticut, April 20, 1864. His paternal and maternal grandmothers were both descendants of the famous Colonial soldier and governor of Connecticut, Robert Treat, who is so picturesquely connected with the ancient story of Sir Edmund Andros and the Charter Oak at Hartford, Connecticut. On the paternal side, Mr. Solley is descended from English stock; but his great-grandfather, Thomas Solley, served as a sergeant in Washington's army.

In early life, Mr. Solley was in very poor health and had to forego many of the advantages of schooling. He has studied privately with tutors, however, and has had three years' training in business. He takes great pride in being a "self-made" man. He is a passionate lover of Colonial history and antiquities, and has taken a lifelong interest in the betterment of the New England country town.

Mr. Solley was a member of the class of 1889, at the School for Christian Workers in Springfield, Massachusetts, (now a part of Hartford Theological Seminary,) where he became prize essayist of his class. Because of his services to the school he was sent abroad in 1889 to represent the institution at the World's Sunday-school convention at London, England. He was requested to return to the school as assistant superintendent, which he did in 1890, after a year of special study at Wesleyan Academy, Wilbraham, Mass. Here he became librarian and secretary of the faculty, and was finally made full instructor.

Mr. Solley was ordained to the Christian ministry in the First Congregational (orthodox) church at Hampden, Massachusetts, in 1894, where he preached for two years. From his studies and teachings he gradually grew into the Unitarian mode of thought and belief, and being called to the historic First Congregational church at Deerfield, he entered the Unitarian fellowship in 1896.

In 1901, Mr. Solley became the pastor of Christ Church (Unitarian) Dorchester, Boston, Massachusetts. In 1903, he resigned to take up Social Settlement work at the Morgan Memorial in Boston, an insti-

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tution of which he has been an enthusiastic supporter for a long time. The strain of this work becoming too great for him, he purchased a home at Montague, Massachusetts, where he and Mrs. Solley have since lived and have been actively engaged in the Arts and Crafts movement. At the same time he supplied the pulpit of the Turners Falls Unitarian church in Montague.

Mr. Solley has given a great deal of time to benevolent work, is a member of the Twentieth Century Club, the Civic League, Boston, and has done a great deal of missionary work. While in Deerfield he did much for the public schools and academy, being chairman of the school board.

He has been a strong organizer of the working forces of the church and has had one of the best Sunday schools and Young People's societies in Boston. He has been much sought after as a public speaker and lecturer and has spoken in ten states in the Union.

Mr. Solley was married abroad in 1890, at the old parish church in Stillorgan, Ireland, to Miss Sarah J. E. Dickson, daughter of Rev. Benjamin Dickson, D.D., F.T.C.D., who for many years was a noted professor of Hebrew and assistant librarian of Trinity College, Dublin.

Frank Demming Solley.

Frank Demming Solley was born at Bethel, Connecticut, December 10, 1866. He was educated at the public schools in Bethel, but left school early—at the age of fourteen—when he developed a very strong taste for business. He then began working for the firm of George A. Sheppard & Son in making leathers for the fur hat trade.

In 1887, after the manner of country boys in the region of New York city, he went to that place, where he had secured a position in the family concern of Ferry & Napier, which was at that time the largest firm of wholesale hat dealers in the city. He worked for this firm one and a half years and then there came ill health and a break. After his recovery he secured a position at Lenhardt's Leather House, where he labored so faithfully for ten years that he was offered a place in the firm.

Although he had developed business ability which had been crowned with success, he had a great desire to enter

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professional life. Although he was twenty-nine years of age, and had been fifteen years out of school, he began studying again in the night schools of New York city in the year 1895. This was an unusual undertaking for one at his age, who had been so many years out of school, and whose thoughts had been wholly occupied in business and not with literary pursuits. He entered the New York College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1901, after having worked six years in preparation for the event. He graduated from that institution in 1905, when he was thirty-nine years of age. After this he took a course at the J. Hood Wright Hospital in upper New York, where he served an extra term upon request, remaining there in all twenty-one months.

Dr. Frank D. Solley was married April 2, 1907, to Josephine McElrath, daughter of Robert and Rachel McElrath of Jersey City, New Jersey.

Dr. Solley began practising as a regular physician first at Jersey City, where he resided with his wife's people. He afterwards moved to New York city, where he has a successful and growing practice.

Dr. Solley follows closely the old Solley family traits and characteristics. In build he has his grandfather's figure and sturdy constitution. He has his father's strong voice, and the Solley trait of vivid imagination, humor, and power of imitation. This has always brought him good fellowship, and he has always been a favorite among the young people with whom he associated.

He has had to a striking degree the Solley characteristic of intuition and character reading. In business he could outwit a Jew, and in the hospital a "fake" never passed him undiscovered. In fact, his power of intuition and his ability to diagnose medical cases at a glance upset many a case at the hospital which was there for a "time off." There he earned the name of being the "fighting doctor."

Like his ancestors, Thomas first and second, Dr. Solley is a strong individualist, has an abnormal love of home and

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his own particular business usually absorbs his attention and time. Through all his years he has been a great lover of his old home at Bethel, Connecticut, returning to it many times, and mingling always with his own set of people in the village, with whom he grew up. He has also had considerable medical practice in that place.

Dr. Solley, like all of the family name, retains his youthful looks, and although married when many Bethel men of his age were fathers, and even grandfathers, he is usually taken for "only a young man," and seems like one just starting out in life.

John B. Solley, Sr., Fred P., John B., Jr., and Harry Solley.

Thomas second had two sons by his second wife, Martha Treat Bradley. The oldest of the two, David Treat Solley, looks more like his father. The second son, John Beach, has more the stature and carriage of his mother; but both, like their half-brother, George T. Solley, exhibit their father's characteristics.

John Beach Solley was born at South Britain, Connecticut. His years of schooling were few, and the schools of those days were poor. The conditions for earning a livelihood were of the hardest. The country was in a crude state, and life for all was largely a struggle for existence. John was not placed out as a boy, like his brother, David Treat, but at the age of fourteen years nine months he went from Bethel, where his parents then lived, to Danbury, where he engaged to work for Benedict & Nichols in their general country store, which was one of the prominent places of business in those days for that section of the country. Here his quick, bright ways, together with a strong faculty which he developed for business, always being in the right place at the right time, and looking out for his employers' interests, won him the highest commendation and praise. After all these years, one can still find echoes of the praise which he so well earned among the old families of Danbury, Connecticut.



Fred P. Solley, M. D.



John B. Solley.

John B. Solley, Jr., M. D.



Harry H. Solley.

THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATIONS.

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At the age of sixteen he went to New York city, where he engaged to work for Camp & Philips, a wholesale hat firm, at 119 Maiden Lane. The fur hat business of the country was then centered at New York city. This was to be his life work. Alone in a great city, surrounded by temptations, and looked upon with indifference by the sons of the wealthy and those more highly favored than himself, he showed of what material he was made. These things only proved to be the incentive which made him aim high and finally hit the mark. John B. Solley became early in life one of the leading wholesale hat merchants in the country, and was well known throughout the entire trade for many years.

John Beach Solley married Frances Mead Hedden at Newark, New Jersey, May 7, 1863, and he resided there for twenty years. From there he moved to Orange, New Jersey, in 1877, where he purchased a beautiful estate in a part of the city then called Orange Valley. When his children became old enough to go to college, he sold his estate at Orange, that he might be freed from its care and be nearer to them while they were studying. He went out of active business in 1890, and retired from all business in 1904, after having been in business for himself twenty-four years. He then devoted his time to his family, and to looking after his financial interests.

After retiring from business he lived at Brooklyn, New York, Fairfield and Greenwich, Connecticut, and spent much time at Patchogue, Long Island, the home of his wife's people. Since 1894 he has resided in New York city, where his three sons now live, and his family life has centered. After having prospered in business, and largely freed from care,—his sons having grown to manhood and striking out for themselves,—he and his wife traveled both in this country and in Europe.

John B. Solley has always been a religious man. He was a member of the Methodist Episcopal church at Newark, New Jersey, in which he was very active. Upon going to Orange,

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New Jersey, he joined the Congregational church at Orange Valley, as it was very near his home, and he was at one time superintendent of its Sunday school. He has been a good reader and a close thinker, and has kept himself in touch with the best that goes on in the world.

A man of keen insight and quick intuition, he has been able to hold his own in the rush and whirl at the center of business in this country, and through it all he has kept the even tenor of his way, loving his home, his family, his friends, and his church above all other things. It has ever been a point of pride with him that he is a "self-made man."

He has inherited to a marked degree the best characteristics of his father, Thomas second. Besides his keenness and intuition, which gave him a wonderful insight into the motives and actions of others, he has had very strong likes and dislikes, often impetuous and impatient, especially with slowness or crookedness in others. But all these characteristics have ever been illuminated with that wonderful wit and power of story-telling and acting which he inherits in common with all of the male descendants of Thomas Solley first. He has been a great conversationalist, not only like his father, but also in a marked degree like his two brothers. This has made him a power as a salesman, and a great source of entertainment and pleasure to his friends. Had he been in public service he could have claimed the title of orator.

John B. Solley, like his brother, George T., married a woman of great refinement. Fanny M. Hedden was of medium build, had fine features, was bright, attractive, and always girlish in manner. She had a sweet voice, and was also a good conversationalist. Together with her husband, her home was the center of all her affections. She lived life all over again with her children, taking the greatest interest in the minutest thing which interested them. To the end she never lost her bright, girlish ways, although she was smitten with a very painful disease to which she finally succumbed at Greenwich, Connecticut, October 16, 1906. She was buried in the Solley family lot at Newark, New Jersey.

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Like the rest of the Solleys, John B. has kept his youthful looks, his erect carriage, and his vivacity of manner, and although seventy he would not be taken for a man more than fifty-five years of age.

Of his three sons, Frederick Palmer was graduated from Yale University in 1888, at which time he was class poet. John B. Solley, Jr., graduated from Yale in 1894. Both men won high standing and esteem. Both studied later at the New York College of Physicians and Surgeons, of Columbia University, from which they were graduated with honor. Since that time they have been regular practicing physicians in New York city. Dr. Fred was tutor in medicine at Columbia University for four years,—from 1901 to 1905. Since then he has held the title of Instructor in Medicine at that institution. Dr. and Mrs. Fred P. Solley own beautiful estates at East Hampton, Long Island, and at Ridgefield, Connecticut. He has a large medical practice during the summer season at East Hampton.

Dr. John Solley has spent some of his summers at Greenwich, Connecticut, where he has been interested in the hospital. He was attending surgeon there during 1906 and 1907.

Next to Edward Morgan, Dr. John B. Solley, Jr., has been the most interested in the Solley ancestry. During his trips abroad he secured some valuable information about the family together with a copy of the Solley coat of arms which adorns this book. We are also indebted to him for reproducing the old family likenesses, for the Solley Bibliography, and the papers from the Heralds' College at London.

Harry Hedden Solley graduated from the St. Paul's School, Garden City, Long Island, after which he entered the hat business, choosing the line which had been followed by his father and his grandfather, in which he has been a marked success. He resides in New York city.

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CLASS DAY FOR YALE 1888.

Class day at Yale was observed today with undimmed enthusiasm. The usual events were celebrated after the good old customs, and the graduating class, who owned the day, were as full of joy as ever. About 11 o'clock the class formed in line in front of the Lyceum and, preceded by Colt's band, marched to Battell chapel, which was filled with a throng eager to do honor to the poet and historian. The graduating class took the seats on the middle aisle, which they have occupied in chapel for a year, and awaited the coming of the president, standing until he had passed up the aisle. Prayer was offered by President Dwight. *The poem was delivered by Fred P. Solley of Orange, N. J.,* and was of unusual merit. The full text is given here:

Four happy years have speeded by
So rapidly, so free from care,
That we have scarcely heeded where
Their course has borne us as they fly.

For seldom has our purpose sought
More than the moment might direct;
But now regretful retrospect
Comes like a sober second thought.

And as the bride who leaves the home
Where anxious thought had never come,
Would fain those joyous days reclaim
While eager for the years to come,—

So we, at this the halting place
Between our happy college life
And coming years of toil and strife,
Hold back, yet restless for life's race.

Each wedded to his life-aim soon
The heat and burden of the day
Must bear; but memory will allay
And soften the fierce glare of noon.

The lonely traveler, when spent
With heat and weariness, within
Some vast cathedral shuns the din
Of sultry streets; with thoughts intent

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On bygone days, called up apace
By mute reminders of the dead,
Forgets fatigue, and feels instead
The peace that sanctifies the place.

So college memories will prove
The shrine of what we hold most dear,
The ties that fast have linked us here
To friends, "the brothers of our love";

And there withdrawing from the gaze
Of all the world, once more we'll be
At peace in that security
That held our careless college days.

The influence of these vanished years,
Of thoughts and hopes that we have shared
When man to man his soul has bared
In times of joy, or when through tears

We've looked into each other's eyes
And read the thoughts we could not speak,
When hearts would throb and voices break,
This influence is what we prize.

We hold it dear above all lore
That books can yield—nay, we have learned
Far more from what we have discerned
In men than from all learning's store.

For that which most we make our own
Is what we live, not what we read,
And truth can be in no man's creed
That from experience is not known.

To "know thyself" was held to be
The highest knowledge by the sage,
But knowing others thou wilt gauge
Thyself with greater certainty.

Our lives have been in common here,
Our interests have been the same,
Yet widely different, as we came
We leave, though changed by every year.

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We came with unlike tastes and powers
More helpful than affinities,
For we have gained the most from these
"As their unlikeness fitted ours."

And this is why, as reason halts
And thoughtfully surveys the past,
We're drawn so close to all at last
And "love them for their very faults."

And here has passed the spring of youth
When life looks brightest to our eyes,
When first we truly think, in wise
And earnest seeking after truth.

As leaves unfold upon the trees,
At once their glory and their life,
When Spring's soft influence is rife,
So life's grand truths and mysteries

Unfold before our minds at length,
When through the power that studies wield
Our boyish notions change and yield
To those which are life's grace and strength.

These studies half disclose the plan
That underlies all nature's face,
And still this truth through all we trace:
"The study of mankind is man."

For chiefly from our fellowship
These nobler, bolder truths have grown,
When sympathy has made our own
The thoughts that flashed from lip to lip.

Youth may be sentimental, yet
Its sentiment is genuine;
And whoso turns his thoughts within
Must own the greatness of the debt

That mankind owes to feeling's sway.
It waters reason's arid soil,
Hard packed by stern, prosaic toil,
And sends forth to the light of day

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The germs of beauty hidden there
To bloom and fructify, and lend
A charm enduring to the end
Of life,—which else were cold and bare.

So friendship formed in college days
Will lend its sweetness thro' our lives;
A part of self, it aye survives
The time when friends take parting ways.

It cannot die,—we're more our friends
Than we're ourselves; our very traits
Are those which each man imitates
In him whose character extends

Its power over us. 'Tis this
That renders farewells meaningless;
For our chief measure of success
To those whom such words would dismiss

With mere good wishes, will be due.
What we bid prosper is a part
Of our own natures. Ask thy heart,—
Will it not tell thee this is true,

That what thou art thou owest most
To those about thee? Is it strange
Then, that we feel—as time and change
Divide us now—that we have lost

A part of self, and yet have gained
What change and time can not remove.
Oh that we evermore may prove
True to th' ideals we've entertained.

For "truth" has been our watchword here,
The object of our search, it lends
Its potent charm to all our ends
And aims, and makes our life sincere.

The confidence which thus pervades
The atmosphere in which we dwell
Is all the secret of the spell
That holds our lives, and never fades.

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We'll find that in the outer world,
Where sham too often rules the day,
Our trust will often meet dismay
And high hopes to the ground be hurled.

But through all doubts and fears we'll bear
A faith that nothing can subdue
In men whom we've proved strong and true,
Who'll honor the proud name we share.

Let truth, then, be our end and aim
Through life as now,—God's truth, that shines
In noble thoughts and deeds, and twines
The laurel wreath that crowns true fame.

The nation's strength, the world's advance
Depend upon the multitude
Of men who thus are true and good,
Who stand for the deliverance

Of truth from error, right from wrong,
Shoulder to shoulder. May we thrill
With just such purpose as we fill
Our country's ranks,—and make her strong.

And may our college ever send
Men firm and true and bound in one
To swell these ranks, till war is done,
When Truth shall conquer in the end.

And now I cannot say "farewell"—
To us so meaningless—but I
Would speak as one would fortify
Himself for strife, and fear dispel.

That word which in the days of old
Ruled partings, I would use today,
That brave old Latin word *vale*,
Which means to me not merely cold

"Farewell," but confident "prevail"—
Be strong, be valiant, as we know
Ye all can be,—your courage show
For God, for country, and for Yale.

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MERCY ANN SOLLEY'S LINE.

Mercy Ann Solley was married at Southbury to Aaron Davis, May 22, 1824, and resided there and at Sandy Hook all the rest of her life.

Mercy Ann was considered "good-looking," like all of the "Solley girls," had deep blue eyes, a fair complexion, and dark hair. She was a good singer, was fond of reading, and was very religious. Mercy Ann also inherited the power of storytelling in company with Thomas and Polly. The Davis home was congenial and harmonious, one of the typical well-to-do sort in New England.

Eleven children came to this home, many of whom died young. Daniel, William, and Sarah are the only ones living at this date. Sarah was her mother's favorite and constant companion. Mercy Ann used to talk to her daughter, Sarah, a great deal about Thomas and Eunice, and we found her possessed of much knowledge concerning our ancestors. She has taken a lively interest in making connections with the family in old England, as well as in supplying the missing links in its history.

Sarah Davis married Charles B. Glover, and has lived all her life near the home of her parents, at Sandy Hook, Newtown, Connecticut. In looks she "greatly favors the Solleys," and has her mother's sweet disposition. Her life has been simple and serene, unmindful of the world's turmoil and strife. We found her surrounded with her children and grandchildren, unhurt by life's hardness, and unspoiled by its vanities.

Daniel and William Davis are now farmers at Easton, near Stepney, Connecticut, whither they emigrated to the region of Thomas and Eunice, because they had heard so much from their mother about the fine country there. She, more than all the Solley children, seems to have retained a love for the town which her parents helped to found.

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JULIA SOLLEY'S LINE.

In Julia, the youngest daughter of Thomas and Eunice, the sad story of their lives seems to be lived over again. She had poor health even as a child.

Julia married Ransom Hinman and began life with the company of young hatters at Kettletown. They had nine children, six of whom died early in life. Three remain with their descendants today.

After living together for twenty-two years at Southbury and Bethel, Julia and Ransom separated. Both married again, Julia's marriage being an unfortunate venture of short duration. During the latter part of her life she was broken down in health and lived at Bethel, Connecticut, with her son, Charles, who was always most devoted to her.

Her many years of poor health, the death of her children, and the unhappy life of her home, produced a state of despondency in her last years. She is buried in her son's family lot at Elmwood Cemetery at Bethel.

Of the descendants of Julia, Elizabeth was married twice, and died after suffering for years with her Grandmother Eunice's malady—old-fashioned consumption. Cynthia Hinman and her descendants have kept to the country, following their grandparents in that way.

Charles R. Hinman has always followed the hatting trade like his father, his uncle Thomas, and his male cousins. Much of the time, like the two Thomases, he has done small farming, once owning a farm in the Stony Hill district at Bethel, Connecticut. He has been one of the most devoted parents, as well as one of the most upright and industrious descendants of Thomas and Eunice Solley. In his old age he is enjoying life, dividing his time between his two children.

George Henry Hinman, son of Charles and Mary A., has always lived at Bethel. He looks in every way like the Solleys, and would be picked out for one in a crowd. He has the Solley blue eyes, his father's thrift, and his mother's sweet-

HIS DESCENDANTS

ness of disposition. He owns a comfortable house at Bethel, and has always worked at hatting. He is one of the leading young men in the old First Congregational church at that place. George H. Hinman has been greatly interested in hunting up the missing links of the Solley family, and has been a great help in securing facts and old family photographs. Just before Ransom Hinman died, he called his grandson to him and gave him the last of his personal belongings. His last act was thus one of contrition.

Cynthia Hinman married Charles Rood, and has lived most of her married life in Iowa. Their descendants live in the states of Iowa and Kansas. One daughter, Martha Louise, lives at New Haven, Connecticut, with whom Cynthia now lives in her old age.

Adelia M. Hinman married Newton J. Warner, and has always lived in the town of Southbury where she was born. Her descendants live either in Southbury or Woodbury.

THOMAS SOLLEY

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CHAPTER XI.

THE FAMILY TREE.

First Generation.

THOMAS SOLLEY. First settler of this branch of the Solley family in America. Born in (London?) England, August 14, 1759; died June 1, 1829, aged 70; buried at George's Hill Cemetery, Southbury, Connecticut. A soldier in army of King George III., and later in Washington's army. (See Revolutionary War record.) Revolutionary War pensioner No. 10,091. Married Eunice Duffee, daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth (Bennett?) Duffee (also spelled Durfee, Dorfee, and Duffy) of Stratford, Connecticut, probably in a part now known as Bridgeport, by Rev. Robert Ross, Baptist Congregationalist minister, December 13, 1781; Eunice Duffee, born December 25, 1767; died December 31, 1840, aged 74. When married Thomas was twenty-two, and Eunice fifteen years of age.

Children:

JOHN, b. Aug. 26, 1788.

ELIZABETH, b. June 21, 1794.

POLLY, b. Aug. 15, 1797; m. Russel Morgan, Nov. 5, 1817; d. Dec. 2, 1858, aged 61 years, 3 months. Buried in Russel Morgan family lot, Bridgeport Conn.

HENRY. Said to have gone to South America and married there. Known to have had one son.

THOMAS 2D, born Apr. 16, 1800; m. (first) Melinda Landers; m. (second) widow Martha Treat Bradley, Feb. 19, 1835; d. June, 1878.

SALLY, m. David Harris; three children died young. Family moved to Ohio.

EUNICE, b. 1808; died young. Referred to in pension papers.

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

MERCY ANN, b. Apr. 5, 1810; m. Aaron Davis, May 22, 1824; lived at Sandy Hook, Conn., and died there Dec. 9, 1880.

JULIA, b. Apr. 12, 1812; m. (first) Ransom Hinman; m. (second) ——— McLean; d. July, 1880, at Bethel, Conn., buried at Elmwood Cemetery.

Second Generation.

POLLY² SOLLEY (*Thomas*¹), born August 15, 1797; died December 2, 1858; married Russel Morgan, eldest son of Caleb Morgan and Sally Drew of Wolfpits, Bethel, Connecticut, November 5, 1817.

Russel Morgan (carpenter), born February 10, 1797. Eldest son of Caleb Morgan and Sally Drew of Wolfpits, Bethel, Connecticut. He came to Bridgeport, Connecticut, and settled in northern part of the town when he was about twenty-one years of age. He built some of the first houses in the famous Golden Hill section. Also conducted a general grocery and merchandise store adjoining his home, near the present Church of the Nativity, where the children acted as clerks and the father went out to work. Died February 26, 1874, aged seventy-seven years; buried at Mountain Grove Cemetery, Bridgeport. They had five daughters and six sons.

Russel Morgan married (second) Julia Marshall, a widow, November 4, 1859. No issue. Mrs. Marshall had three sons, John, James, and Jesse Marshall. Married (third) ——— Banks, a widow, but no issue. Mrs. Banks had one son named William Banks.

Children of Russel and Polly (Solley) Morgan:

ZILLAH, b. Nov. 24, 1818; d. Oct. 18, 1902, aged 84 years; buried Lakeview Cemetery, Bridgeport; m. (first) Darius Bunnell, buried Mountain Grove Cemetery; m. (second) Samuel Peck; issue, Mary Peck who m. ——— Lawton.

WILLIAM, b. Feb. 20, 1820; d. Feb. 5, 1833.

SARAH, b. Jan. 16, 1822; d. Jan. 16, 1908; buried Mountain Grove Cemetery; m. Thomas Hayes; issue, Fannie who m. ——— Warner, of New Haven, Conn.; Ada Belle, m. A. Range, d. no issue; Charlton, and Edward. Both married and removed.

HIS DESCENDANTS

EUNICE, b. Nov. 21, 1823; m. Isaac Booth, farmer, Trumbull, Conn. Issue, two children. Dau., Celeste, m. G. H. Tomlinson, farmer at Oronoque, near Stratford, Conn.; d. Jan. 18, 1910, aged 86 years; buried at Trumbull, Conn. The Tomlinson family were related to Gov. Tomlinson of Conn., a very good old family. Also a son, Edward, a farmer, who died and left a son, Lewis Booth, now living in New Haven, and who married dau. of George B. Davis of Bridgeport.

THOMAS, b. Apr. 21, 1825; d. Feb. 20, 1896; buried at Stony Brook, Long Island; m. Kate Botsford, who d. Dec. 10, 1872; buried at Mountain Grove Cemetery. Had two children, Emma, who m. David Weeks of Bridgeport and had one dau., Dotty, who m. son of Alonzo *Davis and lives at Easton, near Bridgeport. Emma was living with dau. in 1910. A fine-looking woman, remarkably preserved, looks very much younger than could seem possible. Also a son, William, a musician in Naugatuck, Conn. Thomas Morgan was a carpenter by trade.

GEORGE, b. Mar. 17, 1827; d. Sept. 16, 1866; machinist; m. Left a son, George, that Uncle John Green of Bridgeport brought up, said to be employed in 1910 on railroad work in New Jersey.

MARY, b. Apr. 2, 1830; d. Apr. 19, 1899; buried Lakeview Cemetery; m. (first) ——— Micken; issue, Josie and Lettie; m. (second) Thomas Allen; one dau., Mary. Josie Micken m. (first) ——— Moulthrop; issue, Lemuel, a patternmaker, Bridgeport; m. (second) George Osborne, Bridgeport; no issue. Lettie Micken m. W. Irving Wells; lives at Glenbrook, near Stamford, Conn. Issue, two daughters, Mary Allen, m. Frank Edwards; d. Feb. 2, 1909; buried Lakeview Cemetery. Flossie, m. Frank A. Blackman of Bridgeport.

RUSSELL PLUMB MORGAN, (father of Edward J.) b. Aug. 23, 1832 d. Mar. 27, 1911; last survivor of children of Polly and Russel Morgan; m. Eleanor Sophia Lewis, dau. of John and Mary Lewis of Bridgeport, who emigrated from Welchpool in Wales. Issue four children: Florence Louisa, b. Mar. 1, 1855; Helena Augusta, b. Nov. 25, 1858; Edward Jucket, b. Aug. 4, 1859; Lewis Russell, b. Dec. 20, 1861.

LAURA, b. July 23, 1834; d. Feb. 19, 1880; buried Park Cemetery; m. L. Munroe Bailey, who d. Feb. 4, 1895, aged 67 years. Two daughters: Stella, m. Wm. Cleveland, both died; left about five children; Eva, m. Rev. ——— Dodge, no issue, both died.

*This Davis may be related to the Aaron Davis that Mercy Ann Solley married, and Sarah Davis Glover, etc.

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

DANIEL, b. Sept. 15, 1836; d. Jan. 6, 1865; a machinist; killed in the Civil War.

DAVID, b. Aug. 22, 1838; d. Oct. 21, 1839.

THOMAS² SOLLEY (*Thomas*¹), born April 16, 1800; died June, 1878. Hatter at Southbury and Bethel, Connecticut; married (first) Melinda Landers, daughter Lemuel Landers of Southbury about 1822; one child, George Thomas. Melinda died December 30, 1834, aged twenty-nine years; buried at George's Hill Cemetery, beside Thomas first; married (second) Martha Treat, widow of John Bradley, with one daughter, Elizabeth Bradley, February 19, 1835. Martha Treat born May 31, 1809; died February 16, 1891; aged eighty-two.

Children of Thomas and Martha (Treat) Solley:

DAVID TREAT, b. Jan. 15, 1836, at South Britain.

JOHN BEACH, b. Dec. 1, 1840.

MERCY ANN² SOLLEY (*Thomas*¹), born April 5, 1810, at Weston, Connecticut; died December 9, 1880; married Aaron Davis, May 22, 1824, at Southbury. Moved to Sandy Hook, Connecticut, where they resided until death. They had eleven children.

Children:

JANE, b. Mar. 4, 1826; m. Samuel Botsford, Aug. 4, 1845; d. Sept. 27, 1865.

MARY, b. Nov. 20, 1829; d. Aug. 25, 1843.

HENRY, b. Nov. 24, 1831; m. Cordelia Brooks, Feb. 7, 1860; d. 1905.

AARON, b. July 4, 1834. Died in infancy.

JERRY, b. Dec. 28, 1835; m. Mary Ann Leath, Jan. 2, 1859. Moved to Chicago, Ill. Descendants not known.

DANIEL, b. Mar. 16, 1838; m. Betsey M. Brisco, Feb. 4, 1866.

GEORGE T., b. Sept. 22, 1840; m. Julia M. Lewis, Nov. 28, 1861; d. Apr. 5, 1866. No children.

SARAH E., b. Feb. 7, 1843; m. C. B. Glover, Apr. 23, 1872.

WILLIAM, b. Feb. 17, 1845.

SAMUEL, b. May 2, 1847. Died in infancy.

JOHN, b. Apr. 4, 1849. Died in infancy.



SECOND GENERATION.

Three Children of Thomas and Eunice Solley.
Mercy Ann, Thomas and Julia.



Helena Augusta Morgan.

Russell Plumb Morgan.

Lewis Russell Morgan.

Eleanor Sophia Lewis Morgan

THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATIONS.

HIS DESCENDANTS

JULIA² SOLLEY (*Thomas*¹), born April 12, 1812; died July, 1880; buried Elmwood Cemetery, Bethel, Connecticut; married (first) Ransom Hinman. Lived at Southbury and Bethel, Connecticut. Had nine children. Julia and Ransom were divorced at Bethel, Connecticut, 1852. Married (second) ——— McLean. No issue.

Children of Ransom and Julia (Solley) Hinman:

CYNTHIA ELIZA, b. Apr. 25, 1833.

ADELIA M., b. Jan. 25, 1834.

LOIS, b. Aug. 3, 1836; d. Dec. 2, 1836.

MARTHA PHEBE, b. Oct. 8, 1837; d. Oct. 27, 1862.

ANN ELIZABETH, b. Sept. 11, 1839; d. June 8, 1875.

CHARLES R., b. Feb. 15, 1841.

DANIEL, b. Apr. 27, 1843; d. June 12, 1843.

HENRY, b. 1845; d. Dec. 1876, at Norwalk, Conn.

SAMUEL, b. 1850; d. 1865, aged 15 years.

Third Generation.

RUSSELL PLUMB³ MORGAN (*Polly*,² *Thomas*¹), born August 23, 1832, at Bridgeport, Connecticut; married Eleanor Sophia Lewis, July 5, 1853. Died March 27, 1911.

Children:

FLORENCE LOUISA, b. Mar. 1, 1855, at Bridgeport.

HELENA AUGUSTA, b. Nov. 25, 1858, at Bridgeport.

EDWARD JUCKET, b. Aug. 4, 1859, at New Haven.

LEWIS RUSSELL, b. Dec. 20, 1861, at Bridgeport.

GEORGE THOMAS³ SOLLEY (*Thomas*,² *Thomas*¹), son of Thomas and Melinda Landers, born January 18, 1823; died September 12, 1872; married Elizabeth Penfield of Black Rock, Bridgeport, Connecticut, 1848; no issue. They adopted a daughter, Mary Ann Howell, who married Charles J. Palmer, a nephew of Elizabeth Penfield. One child, Emily Pardee, who died, aged about two years. The Penfields are one of the best old families of Connecticut. Elizabeth Penfield Solley died May 20, 1889. Mary A. H. Palmer died February 2, 1889.

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

DAVID TREAT³ SOLLEY (*Thomas*,² *Thomas*¹) born January 15, 1836, at South Britain, Connecticut. Has spent most of his life at Bethel, Connecticut. Is a hatter. Married Sarah Augusta Wood, daughter of Heman and Thalia Treat Wood of Bridgewater, Connecticut, February 24, 1863. Sarah A. Wood, born at Bridgewater, December 19, 1840.

Children:

GEORGE WILLIS, b. Apr. 20, 1864, at Bethel, Conn.

FRANK DEMMING, b. Dec. 10, 1866, at Bethel, Conn.

JOHN BEACH³ SOLLEY (*Thomas*,² *Thomas*¹), born December 1, 1840, at South Britain, Connecticut. Has lived at Newark, Orange, New Jersey, and New York city, New York. Married Frances Mead Hedden, daughter of Elias B. and Mary Tichnor Hedden, May 7, 1863, at Newark, New Jersey. Frances Mead Hedden, born June 11, 1842, at Newark; died October 16, 1906, at Greenwich, Connecticut. Buried at Newark, New Jersey.

Children:

FREDERICK PALMER, b. Oct. 10, 1866.

JOHN BEACH, 2D, b. Mar. 18, 1872.

HARRY HEDDEN, b. Oct. 1, 1875.

SARAH E.³ DAVIS (*Mercy Ann*,² *Thomas*¹), born at Sandy Hook, February 7, 1843; married Charles B. Glover, April 23, 1872. Charles B. Glover died January 10, 1911, aged eighty-five years.

Children:

JENNIE A., b. Aug. 12, 1873.

DANIEL³ DAVIS (*Mercy Ann*,² *Thomas*¹), born at Sandy Hook; married Betsey M. Brisco, February 4, 1866, at Newtown. Now they reside on a farm at Easton, Connecticut, near Stepney.



John B. Solley.

George T. Davis.

George T. Solley.

David T. Solley.

Charles R. Hinman.

THIRD GENERATION.

HIS DESCENDANTS

Children:

WALLACE B., b. Feb. 28, 1865.

ROBERT P., b. July 10, 1873.

MINNIE E., b. Sept. 26, 1875.

BERTHA L., b. Mar. 26, 1880.

HENRY E., b. Nov. 17, 1882.

WILLIAM³ DAVIS (*Mercy Ann*,² *Thomas*¹), born February 17, 1845. Lives at Easton, Connecticut. Married Louisa Towner, at Oxford, Connecticut, 1885. No children. Wife died.

CYNTHIA ELIZA³ HINMAN (*Julia*,² *Thomas*¹), born April 25, 1833, at Southbury. Married Charles Rood, December 25, 1853. Moved West to Iowa, living at Comanche eleven years, and at Marion twenty years. Charles Rood, born March 17, 1823; died January 24, 1875, in Iowa. Cynthia moved back East, and now lives with her daughter, Martha L. Rood Palmer, at New Haven, Connecticut.

Children:

HOWARD CURTIS, b. Apr. 12, 1855.

WILLIAM HINMAN, b. July 26, 1858; d. Nov. 9, 1885; never married.

MARTHA LOUISE, b. Aug. 24, 1862.

ADELIA M.³ HINMAN (*Julia*,² *Thomas*¹), born January 25, 1834; married Newton J. Warner, at South Britain, Connecticut, October 2, 1853; lives at Southbury. Newton J. Warner died April 10, 1885.

Children:

WALTER C., b. Feb. 16, 1855, at Southbury, Conn.

FRANK N., b. Oct. 18, 1857, at Woodbury.

ELIZABETH A., b. May 4, 1860, at Woodbury.

FREDERICK W., b. Nov. 4, 1866, at Southbury. Was killed Jan. 25, 1881, aged 15 years.

MARTHA PHEBE³ HINMAN (*Julia*,² *Thomas*¹), born October 8, 1837; married John Harris, May, 1862; died October 27, 1862; buried at Derby, Connecticut.

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

ANN ELIZABETH³ HINMAN (*Julia*,² *Thomas*¹), born September 11, 1839; married (first) Smith Delevan, at Danbury, Connecticut. Delevan went to the Civil War, where he was killed, 1863. Married (second) Henry Barnum, of Bethel, Connecticut; died June 8, 1875; buried at Elmwood Cemetery, Bethel.

CHARLES R.³ HINMAN (*Julia*,² *Thomas*¹), born February 15, 1841; married (first) Mary A. Yoemans, daughter of Samuel Yoemans, December 3, 1865. Mary A. died January 15, 1874.

Children:

ANNA E., b. Nov. 18, 1871, at Bethel, Conn.

GEORGE HENRY, b. Jan. 14, 1874, at Bethel, Conn.

Married (second) Phebe A. Wildman (widow) daughter of Bennett and Anna Wildman, February 4, 1875.

Children:

MINNIE E., b. July 28, 1884.

HENRY³ HINMAN (*Julia*,² *Thomas*¹), born 1845; married Annie Purdy, 1862; died 1876, at Norwalk, Connecticut.

Children:

ANNIE HINMAN.

Fourth Generation.

FLORENCE LOUISA⁴ MORGAN (*Russell Plumb*,³ *Polly*,² *Thomas*¹), born March 1, 1855, at Bridgeport; married William R. Taylor.

Children:

ANNIE MAUD, m. Bert Bradford of Bridgeport.

WILLIAM PLUMB

ALBERT RUSSELL

FLORA MAY

CLARA LOUISE

MARY FRANCIS

CHARLES H.

JESSIE H.

All living in 1910 at Bridgeport, Conn.



George W. Solley, age 8 months. David T. Solley, 2d, age 5. David Treat Solley, 1st, age 25.
 David Treat Solley, 1st, age 65. and George W. Solley, age 7.

THIRD, FOURTH AND FIFTH GENERATIONS.

HIS DESCENDANTS

EDWARD JUCKET⁴ MORGAN (*Russell Plumb*,³ *Polly*,² *Thomas*¹), born August 4, 1859, at New Haven, Connecticut; married Emma Ophelia Lowe, daughter of William and Abigail Lowe of Bridgeport, by Rev. H. N. Powers, at Christ Episcopal Church, Bridgeport, October 14, 1885. Business man, manufacturer of high-class machinery. Resides at Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Children:

GRACE ELEANOR, b. Feb. 7, 1887.

EDNA LOWE, b. Apr. 16, 1892.

LEWIS RUSSELL⁴ MORGAN (*Russell Plumb*,³ *Polly*,² *Thomas*¹), born December 20, 1861, at Bridgeport; married December 25, 1881, Esther Husted.

Children:

ALICE EMMA, b. Oct. 10, 1889; m. Charles Taylor of Bridgeport, 1910.

RUSSELL EDWARD, b. Aug. 21, 1896. This is Russell Morgan the third, named for his grandfather, Russell Plumb Morgan, and his uncle, Edward Jucket Morgan.

GEORGE WILLIS⁴ SOLLEY (*David Treat*,³ *Thomas*,² *Thomas*¹), born April 20, 1864, at Bethel, Connecticut. Clergyman and lecturer; married Sarah J. E. Dickson, daughter of Rev. Benjamin Dickson, D.D., F.T.C.D., professor, resident fellow, and assistant librarian at Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, at Stillorgan Church, by Rev. James Haughton Kennedy, June 23, 1890. Resides at Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

Children:

DAVID TREAT, 2d, b. Feb. 17, 1894; d. Mar. 31, 1901.

AUGUSTA FAIREY SPILLER was legally adopted and took the family name, May 1, 1906. Augusta F. Spiller, dau. of George William and Julia Ann Tice Spiller, was born June 9, 1884, at Dover, Kent, England.

FRANK DEMMING⁴ SOLLEY (*David Treat*,³ *Thomas*,² *Thomas*¹), born December 10, 1866, at Bethel, Connecticut. Studied at

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

Columbia University, College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York city, where he has resided since 1889. Medical doctor. Married Mary Josephine McEleath, daughter of Robert and Rachel McEleath of New York city, April 2, 1907.

Children:

MARION AUGUSTA, b. Dec. 4, 1910.

FREDERIC PALMER⁴ SOLLEY (*John Beach*.³ *Thomas*.² *Thomas*¹), born at Newark, New Jersey, October 10, 1866. Graduate of Yale University, also of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University. Medical doctor. Lives at New York city. Married Mary Houston Wescott, daughter of Robert Folger Wescott and Margaret Cooke of New York, January 1, 1895.

Children:

FREDERICK WESCOTT, b. Sept. 30, 1895, at Paris, France.

THEODORE HOUSTON, b. Feb. 10, 1897, at New York.

MARGARET, b. Dec. 14, 1898, at New York.

ROBERT FOLGER, b. Feb. 25, 1901, at New York.

JENNIE A.⁴ GLOVER (*Sarah E.*³ *Davis*, *Mercy Ann*.² *Thomas*¹), born August 12, 1873. Married William Asa Canfield, September 19, 1891, at Sandy Hook, Connecticut, where they now live.

Children:

LULU S., b. Dec. 4, 1892.

GEORGE GLOVER, b. May 6, 1895.

EDNA PEARL, b. Sept. 19, 1896.

WALLACE B.⁴ DAVIS (*Daniel*.³ *Mercy Ann*.² *Thomas*¹), born February 28, 1865, at Newtown, Connecticut; married Alice L. Canfield, November 15, 1893.

Children:

ADA HARRIET, b. Aug. 9, 1894.

DOROTHY RAWLING, b. Dec. 26, 1896.

GEORGE DANIEL, b. Oct. 9, 1898.

RUTH EVELYN, b. Sept. 1, 1903.

HIS DESCENDANTS

ROBERT P.⁴ DAVIS (*Daniel*,³ *Mercy Ann*,² *Thomas*¹), born July 10, 1873, at Newtown, Connecticut; married Mary E. Patterson, November 22, 1892.

Children:

BESSIE L., b. Dec. 13, 1893.

LUELLA M., b. Feb. 18, 1896.

BEATRICE R., b. Oct. 22, 1900.

MINNIE E.⁴ DAVIS (*Daniel*³ *Davis*, *Mercy Ann*,² *Thomas*¹), born September 26, 1875; married Ernest E. Ferry, April 5, 1898.

BERTHA L.⁴ DAVIS (*Daniel*³ *Davis*, *Mercy Ann*,² *Thomas*¹), born March 26, 1880; married George A. Quick, August 7, 1900.

Children:

EVA MAY, b. Aug. 4, 1902.

HENRY E.⁴ DAVIS (*Daniel*,³ *Mercy Ann*,² *Thomas*¹), born November 17, 1882; married (first) Nellie J. Johnson, October 26, 1902. Nellie J. died February 17, 1909; married (second) Helen M. Chatlos, October 13, 1909.

HOWARD CURTIS⁴ ROOD (*Cynthia Eliza*³ *Rood*, *Julia*,² *Thomas*¹), born April 12, 1855, at Kansas City, Kansas; married Carrie Patterson, July 5, 1885; died September 19, 1886, at Coldwater, Kansas.

Children:

FRED HOWARD, b. Apr. 20, 1886. Lives in Kansas.

MARTHA LOUISE⁴ ROOD (*Cynthia Eliza*³ *Rood*, *Julia*,² *Thomas*¹) born August 24, 1862; married Stillman Palmer, March 3, 1884. Lives at New Haven, Connecticut.

Children:

BEAUFORD STILLMAN, b. Nov. 29, 1885.

MABEL LOUISE, b. Aug. 19, 1888.

RUTH LURENE, b. Aug. 18, 1890.

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

WALTER C.⁴ WARNER (*Adelia M.³ Warner, Julia,² Thomas¹*), born February 16, 1855, at Southbury, Connecticut; married Frances N. Baldwin, September 1, 1878. Live at Southbury.

Children:

NEWTON W.

BABY BOY.

FLORENCE H.

FANNIE A.

GROVER C.

FRANK N.⁴ WARNER (*Adelia M.³ Warner, Julia,² Thomas¹*), born October 18, 1857, at Woodbury, Connecticut; married Eda Richards. Live at Woodbury. No issue.

ELIZABETH A.⁴ WARNER (*Adelia M.³ Warner, Julia,² Thomas¹*), born May 4, 1860, at Woodbury, Connecticut; married Henry Miller, May 9, 1888. Live at Naugatuck, Connecticut.

Children:

HARRIS EDWARD, b. May 11.

FLOYD LESLIE, b. Oct. 9.

ANNA E.⁴ HINMAN (*Charles R.³ Hinman, Julia,² Thomas¹*), born November 18, 1871, at Bethel, Connecticut; married Daniel E. Wildman, December 31, 1892. No issue.

GEORGE HENRY⁴ HINMAN (*Charles R.³ Hinman, Julia,² Thomas¹*), born January 14, 1874, at Bethel, Connecticut, where he now resides; married Anna Margaret Staib, daughter of John Christopher and Katherine Staib. Is a hatter.

Children:

LAURA MAY, b. Sept. 30, 1897.

Fifth Generation.

GRACE ELEANOR⁵ MORGAN (*Edward Jucket⁴ Morgan, Russell Plumb³ Morgan, Polly,² Thomas¹*), born February 7, 1887;



Grace E. (Morgan) Miller
and Morgan Miller.

Frank D. Solley, M. D.

David Treat Solley, 1st.

Sarah J. E. (Dickson) Solley
and David T. Solley, 2d.

George H. Hinman.

FOUR GENERATIONS.



Master Morgan Miller.

Russell E. Morgan.

Edna L. Morgan.

Alice E. and Russell E. Morgan

Grace E. (Morgan) Miller.

FIFTH AND SIXTH GENERATIONS.

HIS DESCENDANTS

married George Channing Miller, May 17, 1905, at Sherry's Hotel, Fifth Avenue, New York, by Rev. E. H. Kenyon, rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church of Bridgeport, Connecticut. George Channing Miller, son of Harry D. Miller, born July 13, 1884, at Bridgeport.

Children:

MORGAN MILLER, b. June 17, 1906.

HARRY DURING, b. Jan. 13, 1908; d. Dec. 1, 1908.

ALICE EMMA⁵ MORGAN (*Lewis Russell*,⁴ *Russell Plumb*,³ *Polly*,² *Thomas*¹), born October 10, 1889; married Charles Taylor, at Bridgeport, 1910.

CHAPTER XII.

FAMILY TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS.

IT is interesting to look back over three generations of the descendants of Thomas and Eunice Solley and see how characteristics and traits have repeated themselves.

We are told that their son, Henry, went to sea in his youth, married in foreign parts, and never had any connection afterwards with his family, with one exception. All records concerning him have been lost. This follows closely the life of Thomas first. David Treat Solley also followed the sea for a time, making a trip around Cape Horn in an old-fashioned sailing vessel, when a young man nineteen years of age, and afterwards serving in the Northern navy during the war of the Rebellion. But he tired of the rough conditions of a sailor's life, and settled down at Bethel, Connecticut, where he has ever since lived. His son, George W. Solley, has been a great lover of the sea, and has traveled much both in this country and in foreign parts. The country life of England has always had a peculiar fascination for him. He married an English woman while abroad. John B. Solley and his family have also been travelers. Dr. Fred P. Solley's first child was born at Paris, France. George T. Solley had the gold fever and went to California. After coming back he went again to the West, and settled for some years at Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He finally returned to Connecticut, built a pretty home, and settled down at Black Rock. Edward J. Morgan has also been a great traveler. The Charlestown Soley's descended from a noted shipmaster and sea captain.

THOMAS SOLLEY

Thomas first engaged in light farming as much as his poor health would allow. In the pension papers his occupation is given as "farmer." The love of farming was most strongly seen in Thomas second, while Julia and Mercy Ann Solley and their descendants have kept close to the soil. Many of the descendants of Thomas and Eunice have paid some attention to farming.

Although Thomas first gave us no hint of the occupation of his people, we are told that he was able to do many things, that he was very clever with his hands, and that even with his poor health he did a good deal at making ox-bows and baskets. Whether this points to the fact that his people were industrial people, we do not know, but the commercial instinct shows itself very clearly in the descendants of Thomas and Eunice Solley. Thomas second was one of the early manufacturers of fur hats, and some of his descendants, as well as those of his sister, Julia, have followed the hatting business ever since. In the line of Polly Solley, the manufacturing instinct is also shown, and Edward J. Morgan is one of the well-known manufacturers in the state of Connecticut. We find the commercial instinct strong among the Solleys of old England.

Four out of the seven living male descendants of Thomas Solley second are professional men. Three of these are medical doctors, and one is a minister. Six of the male descendants of Thomas and Eunice Solley have literary traits. Fred P. Solley was class poet at Yale. George W. Solley has done a great deal of both lecturing and writing. These characteristics point back to old England, where we find Solleys of professional and of literary distinction, the Rev. Henry Solly and his son, the Rev. Henry Shaen Solley, being both Unitarian ministers of note, and well-known writers. We find also a Thomas Solley who was a professor and lecturer of English literature at the University of Berlin, Germany. He was also a writer of philosophy and poetry. We also find that one Samuel Solly was surgeon to St.

THOMAS SOLLEY AND

Thomas's hospital, that he was also a Fellow of the Royal Society, and that he wrote a book on the human brain, which was published in this country, at Philadelphia, in 1848. The English Dr. Solly of Colorado Springs was a specialist of international distinction.

Another family trait is the great love of home-making. Descendants of Mercy Ann Solley have gone back again to live in the old town which their grandfather helped to found. Thomas second was one of the most passionate lovers of home I have ever known. Some of the Solleys have roamed over wide territory, but their tendency is to come back to make a home, and settle down. This is especially noticeable in the descendants of Thomas second.

Many of the descendants have married well; four descendants have married women of other nationalities; four married women of striking characteristics; and one married the beauty of her family.

There may be something in our family names which will help us to find the unknown ancestors of Thomas in old England. The name of our first ancestor in this country is the same as that of the Berlin, Germany, professor, Thomas Solley. Thomas first also called his most rugged son by that same name. The name Henry, which we find among the English Sollys, was given by Thomas first to one of his sons, and is repeated both in Mercy Ann's and in Julia Solley's line. We find the name George twice among the descendants of Thomas second, and also among those of Mercy Ann Solley. The first son born to Thomas and Eunice was named John, which name was repeated in the line of Thomas second. The name John figures the most frequently of any in lists of the family name, whether under Solley, Solly, or Soley.

Coming down to the closer characteristics of the descendants of Thomas and Eunice Solley, we find first a great tendency to morbidness and brooding over difficulties. Running side by side with these characteristics have been those of great efficiency, and even brilliancy, but the tendency to

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morbidness and brooding has often hampered and curtailed their best endeavors.

The reason for this morbidness is only too clearly shown when we read the story of Thomas first. We also get somewhat of a hint of what a man of pride and sensitiveness he must have been, when we see that he marked his descendants with a curious fear of what is going to happen, a strange suspicion of other people, and an almost animal-like ferocity in fighting for what he considered to be his own position and rights. Clearly he was a man out of his place. These characteristics were most strongly marked in his son Thomas second, and in his grandson, George T. Solley, whose lives I have taken as a sort of counterpart of the characteristics of Thomas first. Both of these men had ungovernable tempers which could be worked up into the most awful fury I have ever seen, even without much cause. This has also been coupled, in all of the male Solleys, with an irritable and sensitive temperament.

But Thomas second had a solidity of character which was always impressive. I remember some such sentiment at Bethel as this: "When Uncle Tom Solley walks down the road, everybody has to get out of the way," which was literally true. Even the dogs were afraid of him. He was a portly, splendid-looking old gentleman with clean, ruddy face, and never had a bad habit other than this awful temper. He hated every form of oppression, and was a man of high spirit and feelings, although a very rough man. The town of Bethel is full of stories of "Uncle Tom," as everyone called him. Woe be to the neighbor, man or woman, who dared oppose him in any way. At such times his tongue was merciless, and his language pictorial to the last degree. In these characteristics he differs from his father. They point back to forefathers beyond Thomas first.

These characteristics must have resulted from the long illness and unsuccessful struggle of Thomas first, with the rough conditions of our new country, with which he had to cope.

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Rough his descendants certainly have been, amounting, as in Thomas first, to almost wildness of nature, so passionate were his feelings upon all subjects; but it has been the roughness of good material which has been both untamed and unused. In Thomas second the sterling good health of the English Solleys was reestablished in America.

But, along with all of this ruggedness and fierceness, which but mirrored the new conditions in which Thomas first had cast his lot, and the disappointment which he felt over his fate, we find other finer virtues which are just as strong. The Solleys have an intuition which for keenness of insight and quickness of perception I have never seen equaled. Thomas second and his descendants could read people at a glance, almost before they were physically aware of their presence. This has always produced in them the character of either liking or disliking things with such intensity that it has divided the people whom they met into two classes, friends and foes. Ofttimes they would act, even without knowing it, upon their intuition, so that they would treat others roughly because they could see through their motives, even before such people had done anything to merit their dislike or their ill-treatment.

Their intuition has often made them both impatient and impetuous, and at times even haughty and domineering. This has caused them to be often misunderstood. But these qualities come more from the clearness of their perceptions, and the warmth of their emotions, than from presumption or conceit. When not rightly disciplined and directed, this characteristic produces a tendency to suspicion and morbidness.

This characteristic of intuition, coupled with the extreme warmth of their family love and personal affection, has always made them partisans of an intense order. A Solley is always found fighting open-handed, and even alone, for the person or cause which he considers to be right. Curiously enough, this illustrates a Latin motto on a wonderful old Crusader's coat of arms, used by one Edward Solley, which being trans-

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lated reads, "Either hand or cold steel." When this coat of arms was first sent to me a friend exclaimed upon reading its motto, "That's exactly like the Solleys."

Neither have the old-fashioned Puritanic virtues been lacking. Although Thomas second was a man of irritable temperament and imperious bearing, he never ran to any moral excesses. His home was the center of his affections, and he never sought outside either coarse or low companions. As far as I know he never used intoxicating liquors of any sort, nor tobacco; and although when irritated he was often wild and picturesque in his language, I never knew him to be profane. Next to his home, his church absorbed his interest. The one who most disgusted him and drew forth his wildest language was the one whose morals or deeds he did not approve. He would hate a man simply because he thought his horse was not well cared for; he would ridicule a woman because she was inefficient or a slattern. His worst epithet for a woman used to be, "She don't know anything, not even enough to boil pot." Grandmother used to say, "When Thomas gets started things have to move."

But the most prominent characteristic of the Solleys is their wit, power of story-telling, and acting. This must have been a distinct characteristic of Thomas first, as he marked all his children with it. And we are told that he died while telling a story of his adventures as a soldier in the Revolutionary War.

Whenever I have come in contact with memories of any one of the descendants of Thomas and Eunice, I have heard about their jolly nature, their power of story-telling, and their fondness for laughter. This is most unusual when we consider what a background of morbid discouragement, sickness, and impotence lay back of their lives. It is as though some sweet echoes of the life in "Merrie old England" had overflowed the boundaries of the dead line between it and Thomas first, in the land of his adoption. It presents a great contrast to the other characteristics of the Solleys, who have composite natures any way.

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Whenever one comes in contact with a Solley he is sure to hear a good story, and it will be told as no one else on earth would ever think of telling it. People would listen hours to Thomas second or his sons as they told stories of the past or illustrated the work which they had in hand. If it was a person they disliked, they would imitate him with such exactness that no physical representation would be needed to complete the picture. If it was an enemy or a cause which they were speaking against, they would marshal such a force of picturesque language that it would seem like an army descending with great wrath and slaughter upon an inferior foe.

Their story-telling often rose to the height of oratory. In the factory, at the village store, at church, or in town meeting, whenever the Solley blood got stirred, they would pour forth such a stream of oratory that it would carry everything before it. I have seen audiences sit breathless when one of them "got a-going."

I remember evenings in the old home at Bethel, when my grandfather, Thomas second, would be in good spirits. He would go over the story of his life with such power of language, that we would seem to be attending a theatre where all the persons talked about became living beings, and moved before us with such reality that we were either doubled up with laughter, or shading our faces for tears.

And this power of story-telling and acting is found in more or less degree in all of his male descendants. Two Solley brothers would get together and talk business or pleasure with such picturesqueness that everything else in the house or factory would be stopped because of it.

Sometimes my dear old Puritanic grandmother would consider things drifting beyond the "realm of grace," and she would try to put a stop to the fun. She always held my grandfather and her children with a pretty strong hand: the reins of her government were never held loosely; and although her denunciations were often severe, sometimes un-

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just, and the law laid down with no uncertain sound, still nothing was ever able to curb the wit and story-telling of her husband, Thomas second, or of her children.

The sterling qualities and rough virtues which Thomas second and other Solley descendants have manifested, together with their keen intuition and business qualities, have given to them a sort of haughty bearing for which we can not see any reason if we look back only to the tragedy of the life of Thomas and Eunice Solley. It could not have been simply evolved, after the materialistic belief of today, for after the example set by our first ancestors, the lives of their descendants have been ones of struggle against difficulties. Neither has there been anything in their environment which would evolve the type of character which the family has presented.

These qualities could not have come solely through intermarriage with good families. Although marriage has brought much into the family, still the Solley characteristics have been so clearly outlined, especially in the male descendants of Thomas and Eunice, so persistently reappearing with the same distinctness, generation after generation, that it is impossible to mistake them. For the reason of the imperious bearing, the fine feeling, and high hopes which have survived their worst environment, their greatest misfortunes, and their severest struggles, we shall have to go back to the family in old England from which Thomas first sprang. There—greater discoveries await us.

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